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# HUMAN NATURE,

IN ITS

## FOURFOLD STATE,

OF

PRIMITIVE INTEGRITY,	} SUBSISTING IN	{	The PARENTS of MAN-
ENTIRE DEPRAVATION,			KIND in Paradise.
BEGUN RECOVERY,			The UNREGENERATE.
AND			The REGENERATE.
CONSUMMATE HAPPINESS			ALL MANKIND in the
OF MISERY,			FUTURE STATE.

IN SEVERAL

## PRACTICAL DISCOURSES,

BY THE EMINENTLY PIOUS AND LEARNED

*MR. THOMAS BOSTON,*

+

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT ETTRICK.

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JOHN ii. 24, 25. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men ; and needed not that any should testify of man ; for he knew what was in man.

LUKE ix. 19. Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

PROV. xxvii. 19. As in water face answereth to face ; so the heart of man to man.

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FIRST NEW-YORK EDITION.

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The Late Rev. Mr. JAMES HERVEY, in his *Dialogues*, Vol. 1, page 343, gives the following recommendation of this Book.

“ **SEE** this work of grace, and procedure of conversion, more copiously displayed, in a valuable little piece, entitled, *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, by Mr. Thomas Boston, which, in my opinion, is one of our best books for common readers. The sentences are short, and the comparisons striking; the language is easy, and the doctrine evangelical; the method proper, the plan comprehensive, the manner searching, yet consolatory.—If another celebrated treatise is styled, *The Whole Duty of Man*, I would call this, *The whole of Man*; as it comprises—what he *was*, originally:—what he *should be*, through grace;—and, then, what he *will be* in glory.”

## PREFACE.

---

IT is maxim among wise men, that the knowledge of persons is of as great use, in the conduct of human life, as the knowledge of things; and it is most certain, that he who knows the various tempers, humours, and dispositions of men, who can find out their turn of thought, and penetrate into the secret springs and principles of their actings, will not be at a loss to find out proper means for compassing his aims, will easily preserve himself from snares, and either evite or overcome difficulties. But the knowledge of human nature, morally considered, or, in other words, of the temper and disposition of the soul in its moral powers, is of much greater value; as it is of use in the concerns of an unchangeable life and world: he who is possessed of such a valuable branch of knowledge, is thereby capacitated to judge aright of himself, to understand true Christianity, and to conceive justly of perfect happiness and consummate misery.

The depravity of human nature is so plainly taught, yea, inculcated in sacred Scripture, and is so obvious to every thinking man's observation, who searches his own breast, and reflects duly on his temper and actings, that it is surprisingly strange and wonderful, how it comes to pass, that this important truth is so little understood, yea, so much disbelieved, by men who bear the name of Gospel-Ministers. Are there not persons to be found in a neighbouring nation, in the character of preachers, appearing daily in pulpits, who are so unacquainted with their Bibles and themselves, that they ridicule the doctrine of original sin as unintelligible jargon? If they are persons of a moral life and conversation, they seem to imagine, they cannot become better than they are; if they are immoral, they seem to indulge a conceit, that they can become virtuous, yea religious, when they please. These are the men who talk of the dignity of human nature, of greatness of mind, nobleness of soul, and generosity of spirit; as if they intended to persuade themselves and others that pride is a good principle, and do not know

that pride and selfishness are the bane of mankind, productive of all the wickedness, and much of the misery to be found in this and in the other world; and is indeed that wherein the depravity of human nature properly consists.

Upright Adam's nature faintly adumbrated the divine, in a moderated self-esteem, an adequate self-love, and delightful reflection on his own borrowed excellency, regulated by a just esteem of, and supreme love to his adored Creator; whence a peaceful serenity of mind, a loving, compassionate, and benevolent disposition of soul, a depth of thought, and brightness of imagination, delightfully employed in the rapturous contemplation of his beloved Maker's infinite perfections; thus bearing the divine image, and resembling God that made him. But he no sooner disobeyed the divine probatory command, than the scales were cast, his moderated self-esteem degenerated into pride, his adequate self-love shrunk into mere selfishness, and his delightful reflections on his own excellency, varied into the tickling pleasures of vanity and conceit; he lost view of the Author of his being, and thenceforth, instead of delighting in him, first dreaded, and then despised him.

The modest, and therefore hitherto anonymous, author of the following discourses, Mr. THOMAS BOSTON, having handled this subject, in preaching to his own obscure parochial congregation of Ettrick, in the Sheriffdom of Selkirk, had a particular view to their benefit, in printing and publishing them; and therefore the style and method is plain and simple, and the first edition printed on coarse paper; but the subject is so comprehensive and important, so well managed, and the book has been so well received, that it now appears in the world more embellished, as well as better corrected than formerly.

Let it suffice, to recommend it to those who have a right taste of genuine Christianity, that all the Author's notions flow so directly from the sacred fountain, that it is to be doubted, if he has had much recourse to any other helps, than the Bible and his God for assistance. Meantime, I am aware of an exception from these, who rank themselves among the polite part of mankind, as that there is *the same harsh peculiarity of dialect* in it, which

is commonly to be found in books of practical divinity. But I beg leave to observe, that the dialect they except against is borrowed from sacred scripture ; and like as it has pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe ; so also, to countenance what they are displeased with, by the operations of his Spirit, on the minds of true Christians, as their common experience witnesseth. However, I heartily wish the exception were altogether removed, by some person's digesting into a methodical treatise, the views of human nature in its primitive perfection, in its depraved condition, and in its retrieved state, who is master of modern style, and thoroughly understands the subjects discoursed in this book, that by becoming all things to all men, some, viz. of all ranks and kinds of men, may be gained.

I am not to declaim at large in favour of religion ; this were to write a book by way of preface. Many able pens have been employed in recommending it to the world, by strong arguments drawn from its usefulness to society, its suitableness to the dignity of the rational nature, and the advantages arising to men from it, in this and the other world. But, after all, may not one be allowed to doubt, if religion be rightly understood by all its patrons ? May not the beauties and excellencies of a precious gem be elegantly described by a naturalist, or jeweller, who never saw the particular one he talked of, and knows little of its nature, less of the construction of its parts, and nothing of its proper use ? Are there not men of bright parts, who reason finely in defence of religion, and yet are so much strangers to it, that they brand these who are so happy as to be possessed of it, with the hard name of Spiritualists, reckoning them a kind of Enthusiasts, unworthy of their regard. The truth is, Christianity is a mystery ; mere reason does not comprehend it. There is a spiritual discerning necessary to its being rightly understood ; whence it comes to pass, that men of great learning and abilities, though they read the Scriptures with attention, and comment learnedly upon them : yet do not, yea cannot, enter into the vein of thought peculiar to the inspired penman, because they share not of the same Spirit ; wherefore it is, that the Apostle Paul asserts, the natural, that is, unregenerate

man, not to know the things of God, neither indeed to be capable of knowing them, because they are spiritually discerned.

From what has been said, it is easy to conclude, that no pedantic apology, on the part of the author, for appearing in print, or fawning compliments to the courteous reader, on the part of the prefacer, are to be expected. The truth is, both the one and the other are rather little arts, vailing pedantry and conceit, than evidences of modesty and good sense. It is of more use to recommend the perusal of the book to persons of all ranks and degrees, from a few suitable topics, than to shew wherein this edition differs from the first.

That all mankind, however differenced by their rank and station in the world, have an equal concern in what was revealed concerning another and future world, will be readily owned; and it must be as readily granted, that however allowable it may be for men of learning and parts, to please themselves with fineness of language, justness of thought, and exact connection in writings upon other subjects; yet they ought not to indulge themselves in the same taste in discourses on divine things, lest they expose themselves to the just censure of acting with the same indiscretion, as a person in danger of famishing by hunger, would be guilty of, if he perversely rejected plain wholesome food when offered to him, for no other reason than the want of palatable sauce, or order and splendour in serving it up.

The sacred book we call the Bible, has a peculiar sublimity in it, veiled with unusual dialect and seeming inconnection: but it is not therefore to be rejected by men who bear the name of Christians, as uncouth or unintelligible: true wisdom dictates quite another thing; it counsels us, by frequent reading, to acquaint ourselves well with it, become accustomed to its peculiar phrases, and search into its sublimities upon this ground, that the matters contained in it are of the utmost consequence to us, and, when rightly understood, yield a refined delight, much superior to what is to be found in reading the best written books, on the most entertaining subjects. What pleads for the parent, is a plea for the progeny; practical discourses upon divine subjects, are the genuine

offspring of the sacred text, and ought therefore to be read carefully and with attention, by persons of all ranks and degrees, though they are indeed calculated for, and peculiarly adapted to, such as move in low spheres of life.

Let it, however, be a prevailing argument with persons of all denominations, carefully to read books of practical divinity, that many of them are not written on the same motives and principles as other books are; the authors have often a peculiar divine call to publish them, and well-founded hope of their being useful to advance Christianity in the world. In consequence whereof it is, that great numbers have reaped benefit by reading them, especially in childhood and youth; many have been converted by them; and it may be questioned, if ever there was a true Christian, since the art of printing made these books common, who has not, in some stage of life, reaped considerable advantage from them. This book recommends itself in a particular manner, by its being a short, substantial system of practical divinity, in so much that it may with truth be asserted, that a person who is thoroughly acquainted with all that is here taught, may, without danger to his eternal interest, remain ignorant of other things which pertain to the science called divinity. It is therefore earnestly recommended to the serious and frequent perusal of all, but especially of such as are in that stage of life called youth, and are so stationed in the world, as not to be frequently opportuned to hear sermons, and read commentaries on the sacred text.

It is doubtless incumbent on masters of families, to make some provision of spiritual as well as bodily food for their children and servants; this is effectually done by putting practical books in their hands: and therefore this book is humbly and earnestly recommended as a family-book, which all the members of it are not only allowed, but desired to peruse.

As to the difference betwixt this and the former edition, which gives it preference, it lies chiefly in the author's not only having revised the style, but the thought, in many places; and corrected both, so as to set several important truths in a clearer light, and make the style of the book now uniform, which formerly was not so, be-

of the explications of peculiar words and phrases in use amongst practical divines, especially of the Church of Scotland, which were interspersed throughout the former edition, and introduced by another hand, for the sake of such persons as are not accustomed to them. It remains that the prefacer not only subjoin his name, which was concealed in the first edition, as a testimony that he esteems the author, and values the book, but that he may thereby recommend it in a particular manner to the perusal of persons of his own acquaintance. If, in his assisting towards its being published, and in prefacing both editions, he has not run unsent, he has what will bear him up under all censures: the charitable will think no evil, and others will do as they please.

ROBERT WIGHTMAN, M. D. G. E.

*EDINBURGH, MARCH 18, 1729.*



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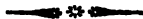
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Reasonableness of the eternity of the punishment o				
the damned,	-	-	-	
A measuring reed to measure our time, and endea				
vours for salvation by,	-	-	-	
A balance to discover the lightness of what is falsel				
thought weighty, and the weight of what is falsel				
thought light,	-	-	-	
Exhortation to flee from the wrath to come,				

# STATE I.

NAMELY,

THE STATE OF INNOCENCE, OR PRIMITIVE INTEGRITY,  
IN WHICH MAN WAS CREATED.



ECCLES. vii. 29.

*Lo, this only have I found, That God hath made Man upright : But they have sought out many Inventions.*

**T**HERE are four things very necessary to be known by all that would see heaven. *First*, What man was in the state of innocence, as God made him. *Secondly*, What he is in the state of corrupt nature, as he hath unmade himself. *Thirdly*, What he must be in the state of grace, as created in Christ Jesus unto good works, if ever he be made a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. And, *Lastly*, What he shall be in his eternal state, as made by the Judge of all, either perfectly happy, or completely miserable, and that for ever. These are weighty points, that touch the vitals of practical godliness, from which most men, and even many professors, in these dregs of time, are quite estranged. I design, therefore, under the divine conduct, to open up these things, and apply them.

I begin with the first of them, namely, The state of innocence: That, beholding man polished after the similitude of a palace, the ruins may the more affect us; we may the more prize that matchless Person, whom the Father has appointed the repairer of the breach; and that we may with fixed resolves, betake ourselves to that way which leadeth to the city that hath immoveable foundations.

In the text we have three things :

1. The state of innocence wherein man was created. *God hath made man upright.* By man here we are to understand our first parents; the archetypal pair, the root of mankind, the compendized world, and the fountain from

whence all generations have streamed; as may appear comparing Gen. v. 1. 2. "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him, male and female created he them, and blessed them," (as the original words are the same in our text, in this sense, Adam was made right, (agreeable to the nature of God, whose work is perfect,) without any imperfection, corruption, or principle of corruption in his body or soul. He was upright, that is, straight with the will and law of God, without any irregularity in his soul. By the set of his creation, it directly pointed towards God, as his end; which straight inclination was represented, as an emblem, by the erect figure of his body, a figure that every other living creature partakes of. What David was in a gospel sense, that was he in a legal sense: One according to God's own heart, altogether righteous, pure, and holy. God made him thus: He did not first make him, and then make him righteous; but in the very making of him made him righteous. Original righteousness was conceived with him; so that in the same moment he was a righteous man, morally good; with the same breath that God breathed in him a living soul, he breathed in him a righteous soul.

2. Here is man's fallen state; *but they have sought many inventions.* They fell off from their rest in God, and fell upon seeking inventions of their own, to mend their case; and they quite marred it. Their ruin was of their own proper motion; they would not abide as God had made them; but they sought out many inventions to deform and undo themselves.

3. Observe here the certainty and importance of the things; *Lo, this only have I found,* &c. Believe that they are the result of a narrow search, and a serious inquiry, performed by the wisest of men. In the two preceding verses, Solomon represents himself as in quest of good in the world: But the issue of it was, he could find no satisfying issue in his search after it; though it was no want of pains; for he counted one by one to find out an account. *Behold thus have I found,* (saith the Preacher) *wit, that* (as the same word is read in our text) *ye seeketh, but I find not.* He could make no satisf

discovery of it, which might stay his enquiry. He found good men very rare, one, as it were, among a thousand ; good women more rare, not one good among his thousand wives and concubines, 2 Kings xi. 3. But could that satisfy the grand query, *Where shall wisdom be found ?* No, it could not ; (and if the experience of others in this point run counter to Solomon's, as it is no reflection on his discerning, it can as little decide the question ; which will remain undetermined till the last day.) But amidst all this uncertainty, there is one point found out, and fixed: *This have I found.* Ye may depend upon it as most certain truth, and be fully satisfied in it: *Lo this : fix your eyes upon it, as a matter worthy of most deep and serious regard : to wit, that man's nature is now depraved, but that depravation was not from God, for he made man upright : but for themselves, they have sought out many inventions.*

DOCTRINE, *God made man altogether righteous.*

**T**HIS is that state of innocence in which God set man down in the world. It is described in the holy scriptures with a running pen, in comparison of the following states, for it was of no continuance, but passed as a flying shadow, by man's abusing the freedom of his own will. I shall,

FIRST, Inquire into the righteousness of this state wherein man was created.

SECONDLY, Lay before you some of the happy concomitants, and consequents thereof.

LASTLY, Apply the whole.

*Of Man's Original Righteousness.*

FIRST, As to the righteousness of this state, consider, that as uncreated righteousness, the righteousness of God is the supreme rule ; so all created righteousness, whether of men or angels, hath respect to a law as its rule, and is a conformity thereunto. A creature can no more be morally independent on God, in its actions and powers, than it can be naturally independent on him. A creature, as a creature, must acknowledge the Creator's will as its su-

preme law ; for as it cannot be without him, so it must be but for him, and according to his will : Yet no law obliges until it be revealed. And hence it follows, that there was a law which man, as a rational creature, was subjected to in his creation ; and that this law was revealed to him. *God made man upright*, says the text. This presupposeth a law to which he was conformed in his creation ; as when any thing is made regular, or according to rule, of necessity the rule is presupposed. Whence we may gather, that this law was no other than the eternal, indispensable law of righteousness, observed in all points by the second Adam : Opposed by the carnal mind ; some notions of which remain yet among the Pagans, who, "having not the law, are a law unto themselves," Rom. ii. 15. In a word, this law is the very same which was afterwards summed up in the ten commandments, and promulgated on Mount Sinai to the Israelites, called by us the moral law : And man's righteousness consisted in conformity to this law or rule. More particularly, there is a twofold conformity required of man : A conformity of the powers of his soul to the law, which you may call habitual righteousness ; and a conformity of all his actions to it, which is actual righteousness. Now, God made man habitually righteous ; man was to make himself actually righteous : The former was the stock God put into his hand : The latter, the improvement he should have made of it. The sum of what I have said is, that the righteousness wherein man was created, was the conformity of all the faculties and powers of his soul to the moral law. This is what we call original righteousness, which man was originally endued with. We may take it up in these three things :

*First*, Man's understanding was a lamp of light. He had perfect knowledge of the law, and of his duty accordingly : He was made after God's image ; and, consequently, could not want knowledge, which is a part thereof, Col. iii. 10. "The new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." And, indeed, this was necessary to fit him for universal obedience ; seeing no obedience can be according to the law, unless it proceed from a sense of the commandment of God requiring it. It is true, Adam had not the law written upon tablets of stone : But it was written upon his mind, the know-

ledge thereof being concreated with him. God impressed it upon his soul, and made him a law to himself, as the remains of it among the Heathens do testify, Rom. ii. 14, 15. And seeing man was made to be the mouth of the creation, to glorify God in his works; we have ground to believe he had naturally an exquisite knowledge of the works of God. We have a proof of this in his giving names to the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and these such as express their nature. "Whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof," Gen. ii. 19. And the dominion which God gave him over the creatures, soberly to use and dispose of them according to his will, (still in subordination to the will of God,) seems to require no less than a knowledge of their natures. And besides all this, his perfect knowledge of the law proves his knowledge in the management of civil affairs, which, in respect of the law of God, "a good man will guide with discretion," Psal. cxii. 5.

*Secondly*, His will lay straight with the will of God, Eph. iv. 24. There was no corruption in his will, no bent nor inclination to evil; for that is sin properly and truly so called; hence the apostle says, Rom. vii. 7. "I had not known sin, but by the law, for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." An inclination to evil is really a fountain of sin, and therefore inconsistent with that rectitude and uprightness which the text expressly says he was endued with at his creation. The will of man then was directed, and naturally inclined to God and goodness, though mutably. It was disposed, by its original make, to follow the Creator's will, as the shadow does the body; and that was not left in equal balance to good and evil: For at that rate he had not been upright, nor habitually conform to the law; which in no moment can allow the creature not to be inclined towards God as his chief end, more than it can allow man to be a god to himself. The law was impressed upon Adam's soul; now this according to the new covenant, by which the image of God is repaired, consists in two things: 1. Putting the law into the mind, denoting the knowledge of it: 2. Writing it in the heart, denoting inclinations in the will, answerable to the commands of the law, Heb. viii. 10. So that, as the will, when we consider it

as renewed by grace, is by that grace natively inclined to the same holiness in all its parts which the law requires ; so was the will of man (when we consider him as God made him at first) endued with natural inclinations to every thing commanded by the law. For if the regenerate are partakers of the divine nature, as undoubtedly they are ; for so says the scripture, 2 Pet. i. 4. And if this divine nature can import no less than inclinations of the heart to holiness ; then surely Adam's will could not want this inclination ; for in him the image of God was perfect. It is true, it is said, Rom. ii. 14. 15. " That the Gentiles shew the work of the law written in their hearts : " But this denotes only their knowledge of that law, such as it is ; but the apostle to the Hebrews, in the text cited, takes the word *heart* in another sense, distinguishing it plainly from the mind. And it must be granted, that when God promiseth in the new covenant, To write his law in the hearts of his people, it imports quite another thing than what Heathens have ; for though they have notions of it in their minds, yet their hearts go another way ; their will has got a set and bias quite contrary to that law ; and therefore the expression suitable to the present purpose must needs import, besides these notions of the mind, inclinations of the will going along therewith ; which inclinations, though mixed with corruption in the regenerate, were pure and unmixed in upright Adam. In a word, as Adam knew his master's pleasure in the matter of duty, so his will stood inclined to what he knew.

*Thirdly*, His affections were orderly, pure, and holy ; which is a necessary part of that uprightness wherein man was created. The apostle has a petition, 2 Thess. iii. 5. " The Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God ; " that is, The Lord straighten your hearts, or make them lie straight to the love of God : And our text tells us, man was thus made straight. The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Now this holiness, as it is distinguished from righteousness, may import the purity and orderliness of the affections. And thus the apostle, 1. Tim. ii. 8. will have men to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting : Because, as troubled water is unfit to receive the image of the sun ; so the heart, filled with impure and disorderly affections, is

not fit for divine communications. Men's sensitive appetite was indeed naturally carried out towards objects grateful to the senses. For seeing man was made up of body and soul, and God made this man to glorify and enjoy him, and for this end to use his good creatures in subordination to himself; it is plain that man was naturally inclined both to spiritual and sensible good; yet to spiritual good, the chief good as his ultimate end. And, therefore, his sensitive motions and inclinations were subordinate to his reason and will, which lay straight with the will of God, and were not, in the least, contrary to the same. Otherwise he should have been made up of contradictions; his soul being naturally inclined to God as the chief end, in the superior part thereof; and the same soul inclined to the creature as the chief end in the inferior part thereof, as they call it; which is impossible; for man, at the same instant, cannot have two chief ends. Man's affections then, in his primitive state, were pure from all defilement, free from all disorder and distemper, because in all their motions they were duly subjected to his clear reason, and his holy will. He had also an executive power answerable to his will; a power to do the good which he knew should be done, and which he inclined to do, even to fulfil the whole law of God. If it had not been so, God would not have required of him perfect obedience; for to say, That the Lord gathereth where he hath not strawed, is but the blasphemy of a wicked heart, against a good and bountiful God, Mat. xxv. 24, 25.

From what has been said, it may be gathered, that the original righteousness explained was universal and natural; yet mutable.

*First,* It was universal, both with respect to the subject of it, the whole man; and the object of it, the whole law. Universal I say, with respect to the subject of it; for this righteousness was diffused through the whole man; it was a blessed leaven that leavened the whole lump. There was not one wrong pin in the tabernacle of human nature, when God set it up, however shattered it is now. Man was then holy in soul, body, and spirit: While the soul remained untainted, its lodging was kept pure and undefiled; the members of the body were consecrated vessels, and instruments of righteousness. A combat betwixt flesh



and spirit, reason and appetite ; nay the least inclination to sin, lust of the flesh in the inferior part of the soul, was utterly inconsistent with this uprightness, in which man was created ; and has been invented to veil the corruption of man's nature, and to obscure the grace of God in Jesus Christ ; it looks very like the language of fallen Adam, laying his own sin at his Maker's door, Gen. iii. 12. " The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." But as this righteousness was universal in respect of the subject, because it spread through the whole man ; so also it was universal, in respect of the object, the holy law. There was nothing in the law but what was agreeable to his reason and will, as God made him ; though sin hath now set him at odds with it ; his soul was shapen out, in length and breadth, to the commandment, though exceeding broad ; so that this original righteousness was not only perfect in parts, but in degrees.

*Secondly*, As it was universal, so it was natural to him, and not supernatural to him in that state. Not that it was essential to man as man ; for then he could not have lost it, without the loss of his very being ; but it was con-natural to him. He was created with it ; and it was necessary to the perfection of man, as he came out of the hand of God : Necessary to constitute him in a state of integrity. Yet,

*Thirdly*, It was mutable ; it was a righteousness that might be lost, as is manifested by the doleful event. His will was not absolutely indifferent to good or evil ; God set it towards good only : Yet he did not so fix and confirm its inclinations, that it could not alter. No, it was moveable to evil ; and that only by man himself, God having given him a sufficient power to stand in this integrity, if he had pleased. Let no man quarrel God's works in this ; for if Adam had been unchangeably righteous, he behoved to have been so, either by nature, or by free gift : By nature he could not be so, for that is proper to God, and incommunicable to any creature ; if by free gift, then no wrong was done him, in with-holding of what he could not crave. Confirmation in a righteous state is a reward of grace, given upon continuing righteous, through the state of trial ; and would have been given to Adam, if he had stood out the time appointed for probation by the Creator ; and ac-

cordingly is given to the saints, upon the account of the merits of Christ, who was obedient even to the death. And herein believers have the advantage of Adam, that they can never totally nor finally fall away from grace.

Thus was man made originally righteous, being "created in God's own image," Gen. i. 27, which consists in the positive qualities of "knowledge, righteousness, and holiness," Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. All that God made was very good, according to their several natures, Gen. i. 31. And so was man morally good, being made after the image of him who is good and upright, Psalm xxv. 8. Without this, he could not have answered the great end of his creation, which was to know, love, and serve his God, according to his will. Nay, he could not be created otherwise; for he behoved either to be conform to the law, in his powers, principles, and inclinations, or not; if he was, then he was righteous; and if not, he was a sinner, which is absurd and horrible to imagine.

### *Of Man's Original Happiness.*

SECONDLY, I shall lay before you some of those things which did accompany or flow from the righteousness of man's primitive state. Happiness is the result of holiness; and as it was an holy, so it was an happy state.

*First*, Man was then a very glorious creature. We have reason to suppose, that as Moses' face shone when he came down from the mount; so man had a very lightsome and pleasant countenance, and beautiful body, while as yet there was no darkness of sin in him at all. But seeing God himself is glorious in holiness, (Exod. xv. 11.) surely that spiritual comeliness the Lord put upon man at his creation, made him a very glorious creature. O how did light shine in his holy conversation, to the glory of the Creator! while every action was but the darting forth of a ray and beam of that glorious, unmixed light, which God had set up in his soul; while that lamp of love, lighted from heaven, continued burning in his heart, as in the holy place; and the law of the Lord, put in his inward parts by the finger of God, was kept by him there, as in the most holy. There was no impurity to be seen without; no squint look in the eyes, after any unclean thing; the

tongue spoke nothing but the language of heaven ; and in a word, the King's SON was all glorious within, and his cloathing of wrought gold.

*Secondly*, He was the favourite of heaven. He shone brightly in the image of God, who cannot but love his own image, wherever it appears. While he was alone in the world, he was not alone, for God was with him. His communion and fellowship was with his Creator, and that immediately : For as yet there was nothing to turn away the face of God from the work of his own hands ; seeing sin had not as yet entered, which alone could make the breach.

By the favour of God, he has advanced to be confederate with heaven, in the first covenant, called, *The Covenant of Works*. God reduced the law, which he gave in his creation, into the form of a covenant, whereof perfect obedience was the condition ; life was the thing promised, and death the penalty. As for the condition, one great branch of the natural law was, that men believe whatsoever God shall reveal, and do whatsoever he shall command : Accordingly, God making this covenant with man, extended his duty to the not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil ; and the law thus extended, was the rule of man's covenant-obedience. How easy were these terms to him, who had the natural law written on his heart ; and that inclining him to obey this positive law, revealed to him, it seems, by an audible voice, (Gen. ii. 16.) the matter whereof was so very easy ? And, indeed, it was highly reasonable that the rule and matter of his covenant-obedience should be thus extended ; that which was added, being a thing in itself indifferent, where his obedience was to turn upon the precise point of the will of God, the plainest evidence of true obedience, and it being in an external thing, wherein his obedience or disobedience would be most clear and conspicuous.

Now, upon this condition, God promised him life, the continuance of natural life, in the union of soul and body ; and of spiritual life, in the favour of his Creator : He promised him also eternal life in heaven, to have been entered into, when he should have passed the time of his trial upon earth, and the Lord should see meet to transport him into the upper Paradise. This promise of life was included in

the threatening of death, mentioned Gen. ii. 17. For while God says, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" it is in effect, "If thou do not eat of it; thou shalt surely live." And this was sacramentally confirmed by another tree in the garden, called, therefore, *the tree of life*, which he was debarred from, when he had sinned: Gen. iii. 22, 23. "Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." Yet it is not to be thought, that man's life and death did hang only on this matter of the forbidden fruit, but on the whole law; for so says the apostle, Gal. iii. 10. "It is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them." That of the forbidden fruit was a revealed part of Adam's religion; and so behoved expressly to be laid before him; but as to the natural law, he naturally knew death to be the reward of disobedience; for the very Heathens were not ignorant of this, "knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. And, moreover, the promise included in the threatening secured Adam's life, according to the covenant, as long as he obeyed the natural law, with the addition of that positive command; so that he needed nothing to be expressed to him in the covenant, but what concerned the eating of the forbidden fruit. That eternal life in heaven was promised in this covenant is plain from this, that the threatening was of eternal death in hell; to which when man had made himself liable, Christ was promised, by his death, to purchase eternal life; and Christ himself expounds the promise of the covenant of works of eternal life, while he promiseth the condition of that covenant to a proud young man, who, though he had not Adam's stock, yet would needs enter into life in the way of working, as Adam was to have done under this covenant, Mat. xix. 17. "If thou wilt enter into life," (viz. eternal life, by doing, ver. 16.) "keep the commandments."

The penalty was death, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The death threatened was such, as the life promised was; and that most justly, viz. *temporal, spiritual, and eternal death*. The

event is a commentary on this : For that very day he did eat thereof, he was a dead man in law ; but the execution was stopped, because of his posterity then in his loins ; and another covenant was prepared : However, that day his body got its death's-wound, and became mortal. Death also seized his soul : He lost his original righteousness and the favour of God ; witness the gripes and throes of conscience, which made him hide himself from God. And he became liable to eternal death, which would have actually followed of course, if a Mediator had not been provided, who found him bound with the cords of death, as a malefactor ready to be led to execution. Thus you have a short description of the covenant, into which the Lord brought man, in the state of innocence.

And seemeth it a small thing unto you, that earth was thus confederate with heaven ? This could have been done to none but him, whom the King of heaven delighted to honour. It was an act of grace worthy of the gracious God whose favourite he was ; for there was grace and free favour in the first covenant, though *the exceeding riches of grace* (as the apostle calls it, Eph. ii. 7.) was reserved for the second. It was certainly an act of grace, favour, and admirable condescension in God, to enter into a covenant ; and such a covenant with his own creature. Man was not at his own, but at God's disposal. Nor had he any thing to work with, but what he had received from God. There was no proportion betwixt the work and the promised reward. Before that covenant, man was bound to perfect obedience, in virtue of his natural dependence on God ; and death was naturally the wages of sin ; which the justice of God could and would have required, though there had never been any covenant betwixt God and man : But God was free ; man could never have required eternal life as the reward of his work, if there had not been such a covenant. God was free to have disposed of his creatures as he saw meet ; and if he had stood in his integrity as long as the world should stand, and there had been no covenant promising eternal life to him upon his obedience ; God might have withdrawn his supporting hand at last, and so made him creep back into the womb of nothing, whence almighty power had drawn him out. And what wrong could there have been in this, while God should have ta-

ken back what he freely gave ? But now the covenant being made, God becomes debtor to his own faithfulness : If man will work, he may crave the reward on the ground of the covenant. Well might the angels then, upon his being raised to his dignity, have given him that salutation, "Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee."

*Thirdly*, God made him *lord of the world*, prince of the inferior creatures, universal lord and emperor of the whole earth. His Creator gave him dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, over all the earth, yea, and every living thing that liveth upon the earth : He "put all things under his feet," Psal. viii. 6, 7, 8. He gave him a power soberly to use and dispose of the creatures in the earth, sea, and air. Thus man was God's depute-governor in the lower world ; and this his dominion was an image of God's sovereignty. This was common to the man and the woman ; but the man had one thing peculiar to him, *viz.* that he had dominion over the woman also, 1 Cor. xi. 7. Behold how the creatures came to him, to own their subjection, and to do him homage as their lord ; and quietly stood before him, till he put names on them as his own, Gen. ii. 19. Man's face struck an awe upon them ; the stoutest creatures stood astonished, tamely and quietly adoring him as their lord and ruler. Thus was man "crowned with glory and honour," Psal. viii. 5. The Lord dealt most liberally and bountifully with him, *put all things under his feet* : only he kept one thing, one tree in the garden, out of his hands, even the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

But, you may say, *And did he grudge him this ?* I answer, Nay ; but when he had made him thus holy and happy, he graciously gave him this restriction, which was in its own nature a prop and stay to keep him from falling. And this I say, upon these three grounds : (1.) As it was most proper for the honour of God, who had made man lord of the lower world, to assert his sovereign dominion over all, by some particular visible sign ; so it was most proper for man's safety. Man being set down in a beautiful Paradise, it was an act of infinite wisdom, and of grace too, to keep from him one single tree, as a visible testimony that he must hold all of his Creator, as his great

Landlord ; that so while he saw himself lord of the creatures, he might not forget that he was still God's subject. (2.) This was a memorial of his mutable state given in to him from heaven, to be laid up by him, for his great caution. For man was created with a free will to good, which the *tree of life* was an evidence of : But his will was also free to evil, and the *forbidden tree* was to him a memorial thereof. It was in a manner a continual watch-word to him against evil ; a beacon set up before him, to bid him beware of dashing himself to pieces, on the rock of sin. (3.) God made man upright, directed towards God, as the chief end. He set him, like Moses, on the top of the hill, holding up his hands to heaven ; and as Aaron and Hur stayed up Moses' hand, (Exod. xvii. 10, 11, 12.) so God gave man an erect figure of body, and forbid him the eating of this tree, to keep him in that posture of uprightness wherein he was created. God made the beasts looking down towards the earth, to shew that their satisfaction might be brought from thence ; and accordingly, it does afford them what is commensurable to their appetite : But the erect figure of man's body, which looketh upward, shewed him, that his happiness lay above him, in God ; and that he was to expect it from heaven, and not from earth. Now this fair tree, of which he was forbidden to eat, taught him the same lesson ; that his happiness lay not in enjoyment of the creatures, for there was a want even in Paradise : So that the forbidden tree was, in effect, the hand of all the creatures, pointing man away from themselves to God for happiness. It was a sign of emptiness hung before the door of the creation, with that inscription, *This is not your rest.*

*Fourthly,* As he had a perfect tranquillity within his own breast, so he had a perfect calm without. His heart had nothing to reproach him with ; conscience then had nothing to do, but to direct, approve, and feast him : And without, there was nothing to annoy him. The happy pair lived in perfect amity ; and though their knowledge was vast, true, and clear, they knew no shame. Though they were naked, there were no blushes in their faces ; for sin, the seed of shame, was not yet sown, (Gen. ii. 25.) and their beautiful bodies were not capable of injuries from the air ; so they had no need of clothes, which are origi-

nally the badges of our shame. They were liable to no diseases, nor pains : And though they were not to live idle, yet toil, weariness, and sweat of the brows, were not known in this state.

*Fifthly*, Man had a life of pure delight, and undreggy pleasure in this state. Rivers of pure pleasures run through it. The earth, with the product thereof, was now in its glory ; nothing had yet come in, to mar the beauty of the creatures. God set him down, not in a common place of the earth, but in *Eden* : a place eminent for pleasantness, as the name of it imports : Nay, not only in *Eden*, but in the *garden of Eden* : the most pleasant spot of that pleasant place ; a garden planted by God himself, to be the mansion house of this his favourite. As, when God made the other living creatures, he said, " Let the water bring forth the moving creature," Gen. i. 20. And, " Let the earth bring forth the living creature," ver. 24. But, when man was to be made, he said, " Let us make man," ver. 26. So, when the rest of the earth was to be furnished with herbs and trees, God said, " Let the earth bring forth grass and the fruit tree," &c. Gen. i. 11. But of Paradise it is said, *God planted it*, chap. ii. 8. which cannot but denote a singular excellency in that garden, beyond all other parts of the then beautiful earth. There he wanted neither for necessity nor delight : For there was " every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food," ver. 9. He knew not these delights which luxury has invented for the gratifying of lusts : But his delights were such as came out of the hand of God : without passing through sinful hands, which readily leave marks of impurity on what they touch. So his delights were pure, his pleasures refined. And yet may *I shew you a more excellent way*, *Wisdom had entered into his heart* : Surely then knowledge was pleasant unto his soul ! What delight do some find in their discoveries of the works of nature, by the scraps of knowledge they have gathered ! But how much more exquisite pleasure had Adam, while his piercing eyes read the book of God's works ; which God laid before him, to the end he might glorify him in the same ! And therefore he had surely fitted him for the work. But above all, his knowledge of God, and that as his God ! And the communion he had with him, could not but afford



him the most refined and exquisite pleasure in the innermost recesses of his heart. Great is that delight which the saints find in these views of the glory of God, that their souls are sometimes let into, while they are compassed about with many infirmities ! But much more may well be allowed to sinless Adam ! No doubt he relished these pleasures at another rate.

*Lastly*, He was immortal. He would never have died, if he had not sinned ; it was in case of sin that death was threatened, Gen. ii. 17. Which shews it to be the consequent of sin, and not of the sinless human nature. The perfect constitution of his body, which came out of God's hand very good ; and the righteousness and holiness of his soul, removed all inward causes of death ; nothing being prepared for the grave's devouring mouth, but the vile body, Philip. iii. 21. and those who have sinned, Job xxiv. 19. And God's special care of his innocent creature secured him against outward violence. The apostle's testimony is express, Rom. v. 12. " By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Behold the door by which death came in ! Satan wrought with his lies till he got it opened, and so death entered ; and therefore is he said to have been " a murderer from the beginning," John viii. 44.

Thus have I shewn you the holiness and happiness of man in this state. If any say, What's all this to us, who never tasted of that holy and happy state ? They must know it nearly concerns us, in so far as Adam was the root of all mankind, our common head and representative ; who received from God our inheritance and stock to keep it for himself and his children, and convey it to them. The Lord put all mankind's stock (as it were) in one ship : And, as we ourselves should have done, he made our common father the pilot. He put a blessing in the root, to have been, if rightly managed, diffused into all the branches. According to our text, making Adam upright, he made man upright ; and all mankind had that uprightness in him ; for, *if the root be holy, so are the branches*. But more of this afterwards. Had Adam stood, none would have quarrelled the representation.

USE I. For information. This shews us, (1.) That not God, but man himself, was the cause of his ruin. God

made him upright : His Creator set him up, but he threw himself down. Was the Lord's directing and inclining him to good the reason of his woful choice? Or did heaven deal so sparingly with him, that his pressing wants sent him to hell to seek supply? Nay, man was, and is the cause of his own ruin. (2.) God may most justly require of men perfect obedience to his law, and condemn them for their not obeying it perfectly, though now they have no ability to keep it. In so doing, he gathers but where he has strawed. He gave man ability to keep the whole law; man has lost it by his own fault; but his sin could never take away that right which God had to exact perfect obedience of his creature, and to punish in case of disobedience. (3.) Behold here the infinite obligation we lie under to Jesus Christ the second Adam; who with his own precious blood has bought our escheate, and freely makes offer of it again to us. Hos. xiii. 9. and that with the advantage of everlasting security, that it can never be altogether lost any more, John x. 28, 29. Free grace will fix those whom free will shook down into a gulf of misery.

USE II. This teacheth a reproof to three sorts of persons. (1.) To those who hate religion in the power of it, wherever it appears; and can take pleasure in nothing but in the world and their lusts. Surely those men are far from righteousness; they are haters of God, Rcm. i. 30. for they are haters of his image. Upright Adam in Paradise would have been a great eye-sore to all such persons, as he was to the serpent, whose seed they prove themselves to be, by their malignity. (2.) It reproves those who put religion to shame, and those who are ashamed of religion before a graceless world. There is a generation who make so bold with the God that made them, and can in a moment crush them, that they ridicule piety, and make a mock of seriousness. "Against whom do ye sport yourselves? Against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?" Isa. lvii. 4. Is it not against God himself, whose image, in some measure repaired on some of his creatures, makes them fools in your eyes? But "be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong," Isa. xxviii. 22. Holiness was the glory God put on man, when he made him: But now sons of men turn that glory into shame, because they themselves glory in their shame.

There are others that secretly approve of religion, and religious company will profess it ; who at other times be neighbour-like, are ashamed to own it ; so weak are they that they are blown over with the wind of the wicked mouth. A broad laughter, an impious jest, a silly gibe out of a profane mouth, is to many an unanswerable argument against religion and seriousness ; for in the cause of religion, they are as silly doves without heart. O that we would consider that weighty word ! Mark viii. 38. " Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my word in this adulterous and sinful generation ; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (3.) It reproves the proud self-conceited professor, who admires himself in the garment he hath patched together of rags. There are many, who, when once they have gathered some scraps of knowledge of religion, and have attained to some formation of life, do swell big with conceit of themselves, a sad sign that the effects of the fall lie so heavy upon them that they have not as yet come to themselves, Luke xv. They have eyes behind to see their attainments ; but eyes within, no eyes before, to see their wants, which would surely humble them ; for true knowledge makes us to see, both what once they were, and what they are now present ; and so is humbling, and will not suffer them to be content with any measure of grace attained ; but presses them on to press forward, " forgetting the things that are behind," Phil. iii. 13, 14. But those men are such a spectacle of commiseration, as one would be, that had set his palace on fire, and were glorying in a cottage he had taken for himself out of the rubbish, though so very weak, it could not stand against a storm.

USE III. Of lamentation. Here was a stately build of a man, carved like a fair palace, but now lying in ashes. Let us stand and look on the ruins, and drop a tear. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation. Can we chuse but to weep, if we saw our country ruined, turned by the enemy into a wilderness ? If we saw houses on fire, and our households perishing in the flames. But all this comes far short of the dismal sight, man fallen as a star from heaven. Ah ! may not we now say that we were as in months past, when there were

stains in our nature, no clouds on our minds, no pollution in our hearts ! Had we never been in better case, the matter had been less ; but they that were brought up in scarlet, do now embrace dunghills. Where is our primitive glory now ? Once no darkness in the mind, no rebellion in the will, no disorder in the affections. But ah ! “ How is the faithful city become an harlot ? Righteousness lodged in it ; but now murderers. Our silver is become dross, our wine mixed with water.” That heart which was once the temple of God, is now turned into a den of thieves. Let our name be Ichabod, for the glory is departed. Happy wast thou, O man, who was like unto thee ! No pain or sickness could affect thee, no death could approach thee, no sigh was heard from thee, till these bitter fruits were plucked off the forbidden tree. Heaven shone upon thee, and earth smiled : Thou wast the companion of angels, and the envy of devils. But how low is he now laid, who was created for dominion, and made lord of the world ! “ The crown is fallen from our head : Wo unto us that we have sinned.” The creatures that waited to do him service are now, since the fall, set in battle array against him ; and the least of them having commission proves too hard for him. Waters overflow the old world ; fire consumes Sodom ; the stars in their courses fight against Sisera ; frogs, flies, lice, &c. turn executioners to Pharaoh and his Egyptians ; worms eat up Herod : Yea, man needs a league with the beasts, yea with the very “ stones of the field,” Job v. 13. having reason to fear, that every one that findeth him will slay him. Alas ! How are we fallen ? How are we plunged into a gulf of misery ! The sun has come down on us, death has come in at our windows ; our enemies have put out our two eyes, and sport themselves with our miseries. Let us then lie down in our shame, and let our confusion cover us. Nevertheless, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Come then, O sinner, look to Jesus Christ, the second Adam ; quit the first Adam and his covenant ; come over to the Mediator and Surety of the new and better covenant : And let our hearts say, “ Be thou our ruler, and let this breach be under thy hand.” And let your “ eye trickle down, and cease not without any intermission, till the Lord look down and behold from heaven,” Lam. iii. 49, 50.

# STATE II.

NAMELY,

THE STATE OF NATURE, OR OF ENTIRE DEPRAVATION.



## HEAD I.

THE SINFULNESS OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE.

GENESIS vi. 5.

*And God saw that the wickedness of Man was great in the earth, and that every Imagination of the thoughts of his Heart was only Evil continually.*

**W**E have seen what man was, as God made him, a lovely and happy creature : Let us view him now as he hath unmade himself ; and we shall see him a sinful and miserable creature. This is the sad state we were brought into by the fall ; a state as black and doleful as the former was glorious ; and this we commonly call, The state of nature, or man's natural state ; according to that of the apostle, Eph. ii. 2. " And were by nature the children of wrath even as others." And herein two things are to be considered : 1st, The sinfulness ; 2dly, The misery of this state, in which all the unregenerate do live. I begin with the sinfulness of man's natural state, whereof the text gives us a full, though short account ; " And God saw that the wickedness of man was great," &c.

The scope and design of these words is, to clear God's justice, in bringing the flood on the old world. There are two particular causes of it taken notice of in the preceding verses. (1.) Mixed marriages, ver. 2. *The sons of God*, the posterity of Seth and Enos, professors of the true religion, married with the daughters of men, the profane,

cursed race of Cain. They did not carry the matter before the Lord, that he might *chuse for them*, Psal. xlviii. 14. But without any respect to the will of God they chose ; not according to the rules of their faith, but of their fancy : They saw that they were fair ; and their marriage with them occasioned their divorce from God. This was one of the causes of the deluge, which swept away the old world. Would to God all professors in our day could plead not guilty : But though that sin brought on the deluge, yet the deluge hath not swept away that sin ; which, as of old, so in our day, may justly be looked upon as one of the causes of the decay of religion. It was an ordinary thing among the Pagans to change their gods, as they changed their condition into a married lot : And many sad instances the Christian world affords of the same, as if people were of Pharaoh's opinion, That religion is only for those that have no other care upon their heads, Exod. v. 17. (2.) Great oppression, ver. 4. " There were giants in the earth in those days," men of great stature, great strength and monstrous wickedness, " filling the earth with violence," ver. 11. But neither their strength nor treasures of wickedness could profit them in the day of wrath. Yet the gain of oppression still carries many over the terror of this dreadful example. Thus much for the connexion, and what particular crimes that generation was guilty of. But every person that was swept away with the flood could not be guilty of these things, and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? Therefore, in my text, there is a general indictment drawn up against them all, " The wickedness of man was great in the earth," &c. And this is well instructed, for God saw it. Two things are laid to their charge here :

*First*, Corruption of life, wickedness, great wickedness. I understand this of the wickedness of their lives ; for it is plainly distinguished from the wickedness of their hearts. The sins of their outward conversation were great in the nature of them, and greatly aggravated by their attending circumstances ; and this not only among those of the race of cursed Cain, but those of holy Seth : The wickedness of man was great. And then it is added, in the earth, (1.) To vindicate God's severity, in that he not only cut off sinners, but defaced the beauty of the earth ; and swept

off the brute creatures from it by the deluge ; that as men had set the marks of their impiety, God might set the marks of his indignation on the earth. (2.) To shew the heinousness of their sin, in making the earth which God had so adorned for the use of man a sink of sin, and a stage whereon to act their wickedness, in defiance of heaven. God saw this corruption of life ; he not only knew it, and took notice of it, but he made them to know, that he did take notice of it ; and that he had not forsaken the earth, though they had forsaken heaven.

*Secondly*, Corruption of nature. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." All their wicked practices are here traced to the fountain-head ; a corrupt heart was the source of all. The soul, which was made upright in all its faculties, is now wholly disordered. The heart, that was made according to God's own heart, is now the reverse of it, a forge of evil imaginations, a sink of inordinate affections, and a store-house of all impiety, Mark vii. 21, 22. Behold the heart of the natural man, as it is opened in our text. The mind is defiled ; the thoughts of the heart are evil ; the will and affections are defiled ; the imagination of the thoughts of the heart, (i. e. whatsoever the heart frameth within itself by thinking, such as judgment, choice, purposes, devices, desires, every inward motion,) or, rather, the frame of thoughts of the heart (namely, the frame, make, or mould of these, 1 Chron. xxix. 18.) is evil. Yea, and every imagination, every frame of his thoughts is so. The heart is ever framing something ; but never one right thing ; the frame of thoughts, in the heart of man, is exceeding various ; yet are they never cast into a right frame : But is there not, at least, a mixture of good in them ? No ; they are only evil ; there is nothing in them truly good and acceptable to God ; nor can any thing be so that comes out of that forge ; where not the Spirit of God, but "the prince of the power of the air worketh," Eph. ii. 2. Whatever changes may be found in them, are only from evil to evil ; for the imagination of the heart, or frame of thoughts in natural men, is evil continually, or every day ; From the first day, to the last day in this state, they are in midnight darkness ; there is not a glimmering of the light of holiness in them ; not one holy thought can ever be produced by the unholy heart. O what a vile heart is this ! O what a corrupt nature is this !

The tree that always brings forth fruit, but never good fruit, whatever soil it be set in, whatever pains be taken on it, must naturally be an evil tree : and what can that heart be, whereof every imagination, every set of thoughts, is only evil, and that continually ? Surely that corruption is ingrained in our hearts, interwoven with our very natures, has sunk into the marrow of our souls ; and will never be cured, but by a miracle of grace. Now such is man's heart, such is his nature, till regenerating grace change it. God that searcheth the heart saw man's heart was so, he took special notice of it ; and the faithful and true witness cannot mistake our case ; though we are most apt to mistake ourselves in this point, and generally do overlook it.

Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, What is that to us ? Let that generation of whom the text speaks see to that. For the Lord has left the case of that generation on record, to be a looking-glass to all after-generations ; wherein they may see their own corruption of heart, and what their lives would be too, if he restrained them not ; for " as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man," Prov. xxvii. 19. Adam's fall has framed all men's hearts alike in this matter. Hence the apostle, Rom. iii. 10. proves the corruption of the nature, hearts, and lives of all men, from what the Psalmist says of the wicked in his day, Psal. xiv. 1, 2, 3. Psal. v. 9. Psal. cxl. 3. Psal. x. 7. Psal. xxxvi. 1. and from what Jeremiah saith of the wicked in his day, Jer. ix. 3. and from what Isaiah says of those that lived in his time, Isa. lvii. 7, 8. and concludes with that, ver. 19. " Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law ; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Had the history of the deluge been transmitted unto us, without the reason thereof in the text, we might thence have gathered the corruption and total depravation of man's nature ; for what other quarrel could a holy and just God have with the infants that were destroyed by the flood, seeing they had no actual sin ? If we saw a wise man, who having made a curious piece of work, and heartily approved of it when he gave it out of his hand, as fit for the use it was designed for, rise up in wrath and



break it all in pieces, when he looked on it afterwards would we not thence conclude the frame of it had been quite marred, since made, and that it does not serve for the use it was designed for? How much more, when we see the holy and wise God destroying the work of his own hands once solemnly pronounced by him very good, may we conclude that the original frame thereof is utterly marred, that it cannot be mended, but it must needs be new made, or lost altogether? Gen. vi. 6, 7. "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him a his heart; and the Lord said, I will destroy man," or blot him out; as a man doth a sentence out of a book, that cannot be corrected, by cutting off some letters, syllables, or words and interlining others here and there; but must needs be wholly new framed. But did the deluge carry off this corruption of man's nature? Did it mend the matter? No, it did not. God, in his holy providence, "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the new world may become guilty before God," as well as the old, permits that corruption of nature to break out in Noah, the father of the new world after the deluge was over. Behold him as another Adam sinning in the fruit of a tree, Gen. ix. 20, 21. He planted a vineyard, and he drank of the wine, and was drunken and he was uncovered within his tent. More than that God gives the same reason against a new deluge, which he gives in our text for bringing that on the world: "I will no (saith he) again curse the ground any more for man's sake for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," Gen. viii. 21. Whereby it is intimated, that there is no mending of the matter by this means; and that if he would always take the same course with men that he had done he would be always sending deluges on the earth, seeing the corruption of man's nature remains still. For though the flood could not carry off the corruption of nature, yet it pointed at the way how it is to be done, *viz.* That men must be born of water and of the Spirit, raised from spiritual death in sin, by the grace of Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood; out of which a new world of saints arise in regeneration, even as the new world of sinners out of the waters, where they had long lain buried (as it were) in the ark. This we learn from 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. where the apostle, speaking of Noah's ark, saith, "Wherein few,"

that is, "eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us." Now the waters of the deluge being a like figure to baptism; it plainly follows, that they signified (as baptism doth) "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." To conclude, then, these waters, though now dried up, may serve us for a looking-glass, in which to see the total corruption of our nature, and the necessity of regeneration. From the text thus explained, ariseth this weighty point of Doctrine, which he that runs may read in it, viz. *Man's nature is now wholly corrupted.* Now is there a sad alteration, a wonderful overturn, in the nature of man! where, at first, there was nothing evil; now there is nothing good. In prosecuting of this doctrine, I shall,

*First*, Confirm it.

*Secondly*, Represent this corruption of nature in its several parts.

*Thirdly*, Shew you how man's nature comes to be thus corrupted.

*Lastly*, Make application.

*That Man's Nature is corrupted.*

FIRST, I am to confirm the doctrine of the corruption of nature; to hold the glass to your eyes, wherein you may see your sinful nature; which, though God takes particular notice of it, many do quite overlook. And here we shall consult, 1. God's word. 2. Men's experience and observation.

I. For scripture proof, let us consider,

*First*, How the scripture takes particular notice of Adam's communicating his image to his posterity, Gen. v. 3. "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." Compare with this ver. 1. of that chapter, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him." Behold here, how the image after which man was made, and the image after which he is begotten, are opposed. Man was made in the likeness of God; that is, a holy and righteous God made a holy and righteous creature; but fallen Adam begat a son, not in the likeness of God, but in his own likeness; that is, corrupt sinful Adam begat a corrupt sinful son. For as the image of God bore righteous-

ness and immortality in it, as was cleared before, so this image of fallen Adam bore corruption and death in it, 1. Cor. xv. 49, 50. compare with ver. 22. Moses, in that fifth chapter of Genesis, being to give us the first bill of mortality that ever was in the world, ushers it in with this, that dying Adam begat mortals. Having sinned, he became mortal, according to the threatening; and so he begat a son, in his own likeness, sinful, and therefore mortal; thus sin and death passed on all. Doubtless, he begat both Cain and Abel in his own likeness, as well as Seth. But it is not recorded of Abel; because he left no issue behind him, and his falling the first sacrifice to death in the world, was a sufficient document of it; nor of Cain, to whom it might have been thought peculiar, because of his monstrous wickedness; and besides, all his posterity was drowned in the flood; but it is recorded of Seth, because he was the father of the holy seed; and from him all mankind since the flood has descended, and fallen Adam's own likeness with them.

*Secondly*, It appears from that scripture-text, Job xiv. 4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Our first parents were unclean, how then can we be clean? How could our immediate parents be clean? Or, how shall our children be so? The uncleanness here aimed at is a sinful uncleanness; for it is such as makes man's days full of trouble; and it is natural, being derived from unclean parents; "Man is born of a woman, ver. 1. And how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Job xxiv. 4. An omnipotent God, whose power is not here challenged, could bring a clean thing out of an unclean; and did so, in the case of the man Christ; but no other can. Every person that is born according to the course of nature is born unclean. If the root be corrupt, so must the branches be. Neither is the matter mended, though the parents be sanctified ones; for they are but holy in part, and that by grace, not by nature; and they beget their children as men, not as holy men. Wherefore, as the circumcised parent begets an uncircumcised child, and after the purest grain is sown, we reap corn with the chaff; so the holiest parents beget unholy children, and cannot communicate their grace to them, as they do their nature;

which many godly parents find true, in their sad experience.

**Thirdly,** Consider the confession of the Psalmist David, Psalm li. 6. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Here he ascends from his actual sin, to the fountain of it, namely, corrupt nature. He was a man according to God's own heart; but from the beginning it was not so with him. He was begotten in lawful marriage; but when the lump was shapen in the womb, it was a sinful lump. Hence the corruption of nature is called the old man; being as old as ourselves, older than grace, even in those that are sanctified from the womb.

**Fourthly,** Hear our Lord's determination of the point, John iii. 6. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Behold the universal corruption of all mankind, all are flesh. Not that all are frail, though that is a sad truth too; yea, and our natural frailty is an evidence of our natural corruption; but that is not the sense of this text; but here is the meaning of it, all are corrupt and sinful, and that naturally; hence our Lord argues here, that because they are flesh, therefore they must be born again, or else they "cannot enter into the kingdom of God," ver. 3, 5. And as the corruption of our nature evidenceth the absolute necessity of regeneration; so the absolute necessity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature; for why should a man need a second birth, if his nature were not quite marred in the first birth? Infants must be born again, for that is an except (John iii. 3.) which admits of no exception. And, therefore, they were circumcised under the Old Testament; as having "the body of the sins of the flesh (which is conveyed to them by natural generation) to put off," Col. ii. 11. And now by the appointment of Jesus Christ, they are to be baptized; which says they are unclean, and that there is no salvation for them, but by the "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Tit. iii. 5.

**Fifthly,** Man certainly is sunk very low now, in comparison of what he once was: God made him but a "little lower than the angels;" but now we find him likened to the beasts that perish. He hearkened to a brute; and is now become like one of them. Like Nebuchadnezzar, his portion (in his natural state) is with the beasts, "mind-

ing only earthly things," Phil. iii. 19. Nay, brutes, in some sort, have the advantage of the natural man, who is sunk a degree below them. He is more witless, in what concerns him most, than the stork, or the turtle, or the crane, or the swallow, in what is for their interest, Jer. viii. 7. He is more stupid than the ox or ass, Isa. i. 3. I find him sent to school, to learn of the ant or emmot, which having no guide or leader to go before her; no overseer or officer to compel or stir her up to work; no ruler, but may do as she lists, being under the dominion of none; yet "provideth her meat in the summer and harvest," Prov. vi. 6. 7. 8. while the natural man has all these, and yet exposeth himself to eternal starving. Nay, more than all this, the scripture holds out the natural man, not only as wanting the good qualities of those creatures; but as a compound of the evil qualities of the worst of the creatures, in which do concenter the fierceness of the lion, the craft of the fox, the unteachableness of the wild ass, the filthiness of the dog and swine, the poison of the asp, and such like. Truth itself calls them "serpents, a generation of vipers; yea more, even 'children of the devil,'" Mat. xxi. 33. John viii. 44. Surely then, man's nature is miserably corrupted.

*Lastly*, "We are by nature children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3. We are worthy of, and liable to the wrath of God; and this by nature; and, therefore, doubtless we are by nature sinful creatures. We are condemned before we have done good or evil; under the curse, ere we know what it is. "But will a lion roar in the forest, while he hath no prey?" Amos iii. 4. that is, Will a holy and just God roar in his wrath against man, if he be not, by his sin, made a prey for wrath? No, he will not, he cannot. Let us conclude, then, that according to the word of God, man's nature is a corrupt nature.

II. If we consult experience, and observe the case of the world in these things that are obvious, to any person that will not shut his eyes against clear light; we will quickly perceive such fruits, as discover this root of bitterness: I shall propose a few things, that may serve to convince us in this point.

*First*, Who sees not a flood of miseries overflowing the world? And whither can a man go, where he shall

not dip his foot, if he go not over head and ears in it ? Every one at home and abroad, in city and country, in palaces and cottages, is groaning under some one thing or other, ungrateful to him. Some are oppressed with poverty, some chastened with sickness and pain, some are lamenting their losses ; none wants a cross of one sort or another. No man's condition is so soft, but there is some thorn of uneasiness in it. And at length death, the wages of sin, comes after these its harbingers, and sweeps all away.

Now, what but sin has opened the sluice ? There is not a complaint nor sigh heard in the world, nor a tear that falls from our eye, but it is an evidence that man is fallen as a star from heaven ; for " God distributeth sorrow in his anger," Job xxi. 17. This is a plain proof of the corruption of nature, forasmuch as those that have not yet actually sinned have their share of these sorrows ; yea, and draw their first breath in the world weeping, as if they knew this world ; at first sight, to be a *Bochim*, the place of weepers. There are graves of the smallest, as well as of the largest size, in the church-yard ; and there are never wanting some in the world, who, like Rachel, are weeping for their children, because they are not, Mat. ii. 18.

*Secondly*, Observe how early this corruption of nature begins to appear in young ones : Solomon observes, that " even a child is known by his doings," Prov. xx. 11. It may soon be discerned, what way the bias of the heart lies : Do not the children of fallen Adam, before they can go alone, follow their father's footsteps ? What a vast deal of little pride, ambition, curiosity, vanity, wilfulness, and averseness to good, appears in them ? And when they creep out of infancy, there is a necessity of using the rod of correction, to drive away the foolishness that is bound up in their hearts, Prov. xxii. 15. Which shews, that if grace prevail not, the child will be as Ishmael, *a wild ass-man*, as the word is, Gen. xvi. 13.

*Thirdly*, Take a view of the manifold gross out-breakings of sin in the world : *The wickedness of man is yet great in the earth.* Behold the bitter fruits of the corruption of our nature, Hos. iv. 2. " By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they

break out, (like the breaking forth of water,) and blood toucheth blood." The world is filled with filthiness, and all manner of lewdness, wickedness, and profanity. Whence is this deluge of sin on the earth, but from the breaking up of the fountains of *the great deep*, the heart of man; out of which proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, &c. Mark vii. 21. 22. Ye will, it may be, thank God with a whole heart, that ye are not like these other men; and indeed ye have better reason for it than, I fear, ye are aware of; for, "As, in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man," Prov. xxvii. 19. As in looking into clear water, ye see your own face; so in looking into your own heart, ye may see other mens there; and looking into other mens, in them ye may see your own. So that the most vile and profane wretches that are in the world should serve you for a looking-glass; in which you ought to discern the corruption of your own nature; and if you do so, ye would with a heart truly touched, thank God, and not yourselves, indeed, that ye are not as other men, in your lives; seeing the corruption of nature is the same in you as in them.

*Fourthly*, Cast your eye upon these terrible convulsions the world is thrown into by the lust of men. Lions make not a prey of lions, nor wolves of wolves; but men are turned wolves to one another, biting and devouring one another. Upon how slight occasions will men sheath their swords in one another's bowels! The world is a wilderness where the clearest fire men can carry about with them will not fright away the wild beasts that inhabit it, (and that because they are men, and not brutes,) but one way or other they will be wounded. Since Cain shed the blood of Abel, the earth has been turned into a slaughter-house; and the chase has been continued since Nimrod began his hunting; on the earth, as in the sea, the greater still devouring the lesser. When we see the world in such a ferment, every one stabbing another with words or swords, we may conclude there is an evil spirit among them. These violent heats among Adam's sons speak the whole body to be distempered; the whole head to be sick, and the whole heart faint. They surely proceed from an inward cause, James vi. 1. "Lusts that war in our members."

*Fifthly*, Consider the necessity of human laws, fenced with terrors and severities ; to which we may apply what the apostle says, 1 Tim. i. 9. " That the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners," &c. Man was made for society ; and God himself said of the first man, when he had created him, that it was *not meet that he should be alone* : Yet the case is such now, that, in society, he must be hedged in with thorns. And that, from hence we may the better see the corruption of man's nature, consider, (1.) Every man naturally loves to be at full liberty himself ; to have his own will for his law ; and, if he would follow his natural inclinations, would vote himself out of the reach of all laws, divine and human. And hence some (the power of whose hands has been answerable to their natural inclination) have indeed made themselves absolute, and above laws ; agreeable to man's monstrous design at first, *to be as gods*, Gen. iii. 5. Yet, (2.) There is no man that would willingly adventure to live in a lawless society: And, therefore, even pirates and robbers have laws among themselves, though the whole society cast off all respect to law and right. Thus men discover themselves to be conscious of the corruption of nature ; not daring to trust one another, but upon security. (3.) How dangerous soever it is to break through the hedge ; yet, the violence of lust makes many adventure daily to run the risk. They will not only sacrifice their credit and conscience, which last is highly esteemed in the world ; but, for the pleasure of a few moments, immediately succeeded with terror from within, they will lay themselves open to a violent death, by the laws of the land wherein they live. (4.) The laws are often made to yield to men's lusts. Sometimes whole societies run into such extravagancies, that, like a company of prisoners, they break off their fetters, and put their guards to flight ; and the voice of laws cannot be heard for the noise of arms. And, seldom is there a time wherein there are not some persons so great and daring, that the laws dare not look their impetuous lusts in the face ; which made David say, in the case of Joab, who had murdered Abner, " These men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me," 2 Sam. iii. 39. Lusts sometimes grow too strong for laws, so that the law is slackened, as the pulse of a dying man,



we do resemble our first parents. Every one of us bear the image and impress of their fall upon him: And thus evince the truth of this, I do appeal to the consciences of all in these following particulars:

1st, Is not a sinful curiosity natural to us! And is not this a print of Adam's image? Gen. iii. 6. Is not man naturally much more desirous to know new things, than to practise old known truths? How like to old Adam do we look in this itching after novelties, and disrelishing old solid doctrine? We seek after knowledge rather than holiness; and study most to know these things which are least edifying. Our wild and roving fancies need a bridle to curb them, while good solid affections must be quickened and spurred up.

2dly, If the Lord, by his holy law and wise providence, do put a restraint upon us, to keep us back from any thing; doth not that restraint whet the edge of our natural inclinations, and make us so much the more keener in our desires? And in this do we not betray it plainly that we are Adam's children; Gen. iii. 3, 6. I think this cannot be denied; for daily observation evinceth, that it is a natural principle, that stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant, Prov. ix. 17. The very Heathens are convinced, that man was possessed with this spirit of contradiction, though they knew not the spring of it. How often do men give themselves the loose in these things, in which, if God had left them at liberty, they would have bound up themselves! But corrupt nature takes a pleasure in the very jumping over the hedge. And is it not a repeating of our father's folly, that men will rather climb for forbidden fruit, than gather what is shaken off the tree of good providence to them, when they have God's express allowance for it?

3dly, Which of all the children of Adam is not naturally disposed to hear the instruction that causeth to err? And was not this the rock our first parents split upon? Gen. iii. 4, 6. How apt is weak man, ever since that time, to parley with temptations! "God speaketh once; yet man perceiveth it not," Job xxxiii. 14. but readily doth he listen to Satan. Men might often come fair off, if they would dismiss temptations with abhorrence, when they appear; if they would nip them in the bud, they

would soon die away ; but, alas ! when we see the train laid for us, and the fire put to it, yet we stand till it run along, and we be blown up with its force.

*4thly*, Do not the eyes in our head often blind the eyes of the mind ? And was not this the very case of our first parents ? Gen. iii. 6. Man is never more blind than when he is looking on the objects that are most pleasant to sense. Since the eyes of our first parents were opened to the forbidden fruit, mens eyes have been the gates of destruction to their souls ; at which impure imaginations and sinful desires have entered the heart, to the wounding of the soul, wasting of the conscience, and bringing dismal effects sometimes on whole societies ; as in Achan's case, Joshua vii. 21. Holy Job was aware of this danger, from these two little rolling bodies, which a very small splinter of wood will make useless ; so as (with that King who durst not, with his ten thousand, meet him that came with twenty thousand against him, Luke xiv. 31, 32.) he sendeth and desireth conditions of peace, Job xxxi. 1. " I have made a covenant with mine eyes," &c.

*5thly*, Is it not natural for us, to care for the body, even at the expence of the soul ? This was one ingredient in the sin of our first parents, Gen. iii. 6. O how happy might we be, if we were but at half the pains about our souls, that we bestow upon our bodies ! If that question, " What must I do to be saved ?" (Acts xvi. 30.) did run but near as oft through our minds, as those other questions do, " What shall we eat ; what shall we drink ; where-withal shall we be cloathed ?" Mat. vi. 21. many a (now) hopeless case would turn very hopeful. But the truth is, most men live as if they were nothing but a lump of flesh ; or as if their souls served for no other use, but like salt to keep the body from corrupting : " They are flesh," John iii. 6. " They mind the things of the flesh," Rom. viii. 5. and " they live after the flesh," ver. 13. If the consent of the flesh be got to an action, the consent of the conscience is rarely waited for ; yea, the body is often served, when the conscience has entered a dissent.

*6thly*, Is not every one, by nature, discontent with his present lot in the world, or with some one thing or other in it ? This also was Adam's case, Gen. iii. 5, 6. Some one thing is always missing ; so that man is a creature

given to changes. And if any doubt of this, let them look over all their enjoyments ; and after a review of them, listen to their own hearts, and they will hear a secret murmuring for want of something ; though, perhaps, if they considered the matter right, they would see that it is better for them to want, than to have that something. Since the hearts of our first parents flew out at their eyes, on the forbidden fruit, and a night of darkness was thereby brought on the world ; their posterity have a natural disease, which Solomon calls, " The wandering of the desires," (or, as the word is, " The walking of the soul,") Eccl. vi. 9. This is a sort of diabolical trance, wherein the soul traverseth the world ; feeds itself with a thousand airy nothings ; snatcheth at this and the other created excellency, in imagination and desire ; goes here and there, and every where, except where it should go. And the soul is never cured of this disease, till overcoming grace bring it back, to take up its everlasting rest in God through Christ : But till this be, if man were set again in Paradise, the garden of the Lord ; all the pleasures there would not keep him from looking, yea, and leaping over the hedge a second time.

*7thly*, Are we not far more easily impressed and influenced by evil counsels and examples, than by those that are good ? You will see this was the ruin of Adam, Gen. iii. 6. Evil example, to this day, is one of Satan's master-devices to ruin men. And though we have by nature more of the fox than of the lamb ; yet that ill property some observe in this creature, *viz.* That if one lamb skip into a water, the rest that are near will suddenly follow, may be observed also in the disposition of the children of men ; to whom it is very natural to embrace an evil way, because they see others upon it before them. Ill example has frequently the force of a violent stream, to carry us over plain duty ; but especially, if the example be given by those we bear a great affection to ; our affection, in that case, blinds our judgment ; and what we would abhor in others, is complied with, to humour them. And nothing is more plain, than that generally men chuse rather to do what the most do, than what the best do.

*8thly*, Who of all Adam's sons need be taught the art

of sewing fig-leaves together, to cover their nakedness? Gen. iii. 7. When we have ruined ourselves, and made ourselves naked, to our shame; we naturally seek to help ourselves by ourselves; and many poor shifts are fallen upon, as silly and insignificant as Adam's fig-leaves. What pains are men at, to cover their sin from their own consciences, and draw all the fair colours upon it that they can? And when once convictions are fastened upon them, so that they cannot but see themselves naked; it is as natural for them to attempt to spin a cover to it out of their own bowels, as for fishes to swim in the waters, or birds to fly in the air. Therefore, the first question of the convinced is, *What shall we do?* Acts ii. 27. How shall we qualify ourselves? What shall we perform? Not minding that the new creature is God's own workmanship (or deed, Eph. ii. 10.) more than Adam thought of being clothed with skins of sacrifices, Gen. iii. 21.

*9thly*, Do not Adam's children naturally follow his footsteps, in hiding themselves from the presence of the Lord? Gen. iii. 8. We are every whit as blind in this matter as he was, who thought to hide himself from the presence of God among the shady trees of the garden. We are very apt to promise ourselves more security in a secret sin, than in one that is openly committed. "The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me," Job xxiv. 15. And men will freely do that in secret, which they would be ashamed to do in the presence of a child; as if darkness could hide from an all-seeing God. Are we not naturally careless of communion with God; ay, and averse to it? Never was there any communion betwixt God and Adam's children, where the Lord himself had not the first word. If he would let them alone, they would never inquire after him. Isa. lvii. 18. *I hide me.*—Did he seek after a hiding God? Very far from it.—He went on in the way of his heart.

*10thly*, How loath are men to confess sin, to take guilt and shame to themselves! And was it not thus in the case before us? Gen. iii. 10. Adam confesseth his nakedness, which he could not get denied; but not one word he says of his sins: Here was the reason of it, he would fain have

hid it if he could. It is as natural for us to hide sin as to commit it. Many sad instances thereof we have in this world ; but a far clearer proof of it we shall get at the day of judgment, the day in which *God will judge the secrets of men*, Rom. ii. 16. Many a foul mouth will then be seen, which is now wiped and saith, *I have done no wickedness*, Proverbs xxx. 20.

*Lastly*, Is it not natural for us to extenuate our sin, and transfer the guilt upon others ? And when God examined our guilty first parents, did not Adam lay the blame on the serpent ? Gen. iii. 12, 13. Now Adam's children need not be taught this hellish policy ; before they can well speak (if they cannot get the fact denied) they will cunningly lisp out something to lessen their fault, and lay the blame upon another. Nay, so natural is this to men, that in the greatest of sins, they will lay the fault upon God himself ; they will blaspheme his holy providence, under the mistaken name of misfortune, or ill-luck, and thereby lay the blame of their sin at heaven's door. And was not this one of Adam's tricks after his fall ? Gen. iii. 12. " And the man said, the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Observe the order of the speech. He makes his apology in the first place ; and then comes his confession : His apology is long ; but his confession very short ; it is all comprehended in a word, *And I did eat*. How pointed and distinct is his apology, as if he was afraid his meaning would have been mistaken ? *The woman*, says he, or that woman, as if he would have pointed the Judge to his own work, of which we read, Gen. ii. 22. There was but one woman then in the world ; so that one would think he needed not have been so nice and exact in pointing at her ; yet she is as carefully marked out in his defence, as if there had been ten thousand. *The woman whom thou gavest me* : Here he speaks as if he had been ruined with God's gifts. And to make the shift look the blacker, it is added to all this, *thou gavest to be with me*, a constant companion, to stand by me as a helper. This looks as if Adam would have fathered an ill design upon the Lord, in giving him this gift. And after all, there is a new demonstrative here, before the sentence is complete ; he says not, *The woman*

*gave me*, but *the woman she gave me*: emphatically, as if he had said, *She*, even *She* gave me of the tree. This much for his apology. But his confession is quickly over, in one word, (as he spoke it,) *and I did eat*. And there is nothing here to point to himself, and as little to shew what he had eaten. How natural is this black art to Adam's posterity! He that runs may read it. So universally does Solomon's observe hold true, Prov. xvii. 3. "The foolishness of man perverteth his ways, and his heart fretteth against the Lord." Let us then call fallen Adam, *father*: let us not deny the relation, seeing we bear his image.

And now to shut up this point, sufficiently confirmed by concurring evidence from the Lord's word, our own experience and observation; let us be persuaded to believe the doctrine of the corruption of our nature; and to look to the second Adam, the blessed Jesus, for the application of his precious blood, to remove the guilt of this sin; and for the efficacy of his holy Spirit, to make us new creatures, knowing that except *we be born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God*.

### *Of the Corruption of the Understanding.*

SECONDLY, I proceed to enquire into the corruption of nature, in the several parts thereof. But who can comprehend it? Who can take the exact dimension of it, in its breadth, length, height, and depth? The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Jer. xvii. 9. However, we may quickly perceive as much of it, as may be matter of deepest humiliation, and may discover to us the absolute necessity of regeneration. Man in his natural state is altogether corrupt. Both soul and body are polluted, as the apostle proves at large, Rom. iii. 10—18. As for the soul, this natural corruption has spread itself through all the faculties thereof; and is to be found in the understanding, the will, the affections, the conscience, and the memory.

I. The understanding, that leading faculty, is despoiled of its primitive glory, and covered over with confusion. We have fallen into the hands of our grand adversary, as Samson into the hands of the Philistines, and are deprived

of our two eyes. *There is none that understandeth*, Rom. iii. 11. *Mind and conscience are defiled*, Tit. i. 15. The natural man's apprehension of divine things is corrupt, Psal. l. 21. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." His judgment is corrupt, and cannot be otherwise, seeing his eye is evil: And therefore the scriptures, that shew that men did all wrong, says, *Every one did that which was right in his own eyes*, Judges xvii. 7. and xxi. 25. And his imaginations, or reasonings, must be cast down, by the power of the word, being of a piece with his judgment, 2 Cor. x. 5. But, to point out this corruption of the mind or understanding more particularly, let these following things be considered:

*First*, There is a natural weakness in the minds of men, with respect to spiritual things. The apostle determines concerning every one that is not endued with the graces of the Spirit, *That he is blind and cannot see afar off*, 2 Pet. i. 9. Hence the Spirit of God, in the scripture, clothes, as it were, divine truths with earthly figures, even as parents teach their children, using similitudes, Hos. xii. 10. Which, though it doth not cure, yet doth evidence this natural weakness in the minds of men. But we want not plain proofs of it from experience. As, (1.) How hard a task is it to teach many people, the common principles of our holy religion, and to make truths so plain as they may understand them? Here there must be *precept upon precept, precept upon precept: line upon line, line upon line*, Isa. xxviii. 10. Try the same persons in other things, they shall be found *wiser in their generation than the children of light*. They understand their work and business in the world as well as their neighbours, though they be very stupid and unteachable in the matters of God. Tell them how they may advance their worldly wealth, or how they may gratify their lusts, and they will quickly understand these things; though it is very hard to make them know how their souls may be saved; or how their hearts may find rest in Jesus Christ.—(2.) Consider these who have many advantages, beyond the common gang of mankind; who have had the benefit of good education and instruction; yea, and are blest with the light of grace in that measure, wherein it is distributed to the saints on earth; yet how small a portion have they of the know-

ledge of divine things ! What ignorance and confusion do still remain in their minds ! How often are they mired, even in the matter of practical truths, and speak as a child in these things ! It is a pitiful weakness, that we cannot perceive the things which God has revealed to us ; and it must needs be a sinful weakness, since the law of God requires us to know and believe them. (3.) What dangerous mistakes are to be found amongst men in their concerns of greatest weight ! What woful delusions prevail over them ! Do we not often see those, who otherwise are the wisest of men, the most notorious fools, with respect to their souls interest ? Matth. xi. 25. " Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent." Many that are eagle-eyed in the trifles of time, are like owls and bats in the light of life. Nay, truly, the life of every natural man is but one continued dream and delusion ; out of which he never awakes, till either by a new light darted from heaven into his soul, he come to himself, Luke xv. 17. or, *in hell he lift up his eyes*, chap. xvi. 23. And therefore in scripture-account, be he never so wise, he is a fool, and a simple one.

*Secondly*, Man's understanding is naturally overwhelmed with gross darkness in spiritual things. Man at the instigation of the devil, attempting to break out a new light in his mind, (Gen. iii. 5.) instead of that, broke up the doors of the bottomless pit ; so as, by the smoke thereof, he was buried in darkness. When God at first had made man, his mind was a lamp of light ; but now, when he comes to make him over again, in regeneration, he finds it darkness, Eph. v. 8. " Ye were sometimes darkness." Sin has closed the windows of the soul ; darkness is over all that region. It is the land of darkness, and shadow of death, where the light is as darkness. The prince of darkness reigns there, and nothing but the works of darkness are framed there. We are born spiritually blind, and cannot be restored without a miracle of grace. This is thy case, whosoever thou art, if thou art not born again. And that you may be convinced in this matter, take those following evidences of it :

*Evidence 1.* The darkness that was upon the face of the world before, and at the time when Christ came, arising as the Sun of righteousness upon the earth. When Adam,



by his sin, had lost that primitive light wherewith he was endued in his creation, it pleased God to make a gracious revelation of his mind and will to him, touching the way of salvation, Gen. iii. 15. This was handed down by him, and other godly fathers, before the flood; yet the natural darkness of the mind of man prevailed so far against that revelation, as to carry off all sense of true religion from the old world, except what remained in Noah's family, which was preserved in the ark. After the flood, as men multiplied on the earth, the natural darkness of mind prevails again, and the light decays, till it died out among the generality of mankind, and is preserved only among the posterity of Shem. And even with them it was well near its setting, when God called Abraham from serving other gods, Josh. xxiv. 15. God gives Abraham a more clear and full revelation, and he communicates the same to his family, Gen. xvii. 19. Yet the natural darkness wears it out at length, save what of it was preserved among the posterity of Jacob. They being carried down into Egypt, that darkness prevailed so, as to leave them very little sense of true religion; and a new revelation behoved to be made them in the wilderness. And many a cloud of darkness got above that, now and then, during the time from Moses to Christ. When Christ came, the world was divided into Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, and the true light with them, were within an inclosure, Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. Betwixt them and the Gentile world there was a partition-wall of God's making, namely, the ceremonial law; and upon that there was reared up another of man's own making, namely, a rooted enmity betwixt the parties, Eph. ii. 14, 15. If we look abroad, without the inclosure, (and except those proselytes of the Gentiles, who, by means of some rays of light breaking forth unto them from within the inclosure, having renounced idolatry, worshipped the true God, but did not conform to the Mosaical rites,) we see nothing but dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruelty, Psal. lxxiv. 20. Gross darkness covered the face of the Gentile world; and the way of salvation was utterly unknown among them. They were drowned in superstition and idolatry; and had multiplied their idols to such a vast number, that above thirty thousand are reckoned to have been worship-

ped by those of Europe alone.—Whatever wisdom was among their philosophers, the world by that wisdom knew not God, 1. Cor. i. 21. and all their researches in religion were but groping in the dark, Acts xvii. 27. If we look within the inclosure, and, except a few that were groaning and waiting for the Consolation of Israel, we will see a gross darkness on the face of that generation. Though to them were committed the oracles of God, yet they were most corrupt in their doctrine. Their traditions were multiplied, but the knowledge of these things wherein the life of religion lies was lost: Masters of Israel knew not the nature and necessity of regeneration, John iii. 10. Their religion was to build on their birth-privilege, as children of Abraham; Matth. iii. 9. to glory in their circumcision, and other external ordinances, Philip. iii. 2, 3. And to rest in the law, (Rom. ii. 17.) after they had, by their false glosses, cut it so short, as they might go well near to the fulfilling of it, Matth. v.

Thus was darkness over the face of the world, when Christ, the true light, came into it; and so is darkness over every soul, till he, as the day-star, arise in the heart. The former is an evidence of the latter. What, but the natural darkness of mens minds, could still thus wear out the light of external revelation, in a matter upon which eternal happiness did depend? Men did not forget the way or preserving their lives, but how quickly did they lose the knowledge of the way of salvation of their souls, which are of infinite more weight and worth! When patriarchs and prophets teaching was ineffectual, men behoved to be taught of God himself, who alone can open the eyes of the understanding. But, that it might appear that the corruption of man's mind lay deeper than to be cured by mere external revelation, there were but very few converted by Christ's preaching, who spake as never man spoke, John xii. 37, 38. The great cure on the generation remained to be performed, by the Spirit accompanying the preaching of the apostles; who, according to the promise, (John xiv. 12.) were to do great works. And if we look to the miracles wrought by our blessed Lord, we will find, that, by applying the remedy to the soul, for the cure of bodily distempers, (as in the case of the man sick of the palsy, Matth. ix 2.) he plainly

(Deut. xxix. 3.) to whom nevertheless the Lord had not "given an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto that day," ver. 4. Many a man that bears the name of a Christian may make Pharaoh's confession of faith, Exod. v. 2. "I know not the Lord," neither will they let go when he commands them to part with. God is with them as a prince in disguise among his subjects who meets with no better treatment from them, than if they were his fellows, Psal. l. 21. Do they know Christ or see his glory, and any beauty in him, for which he is to be desired? If they did, they would not slight him as they do; a view of his glory would so dazzle all creature excellency, that they would take him for, and instead of all, and gladly close with him, as he offereth himself in the gospel, John iv. 10. Psal. ix. 10. Matth. xiii. 44, 45, 50. Do they know what sin is, who hug the serpent in their bosom, hold fast deceit, and refuse to let it go? I own, indeed, they may have a natural knowledge of those things; as the unbelieving Jews had of Christ, whom they saw and conversed with; but there was spiritual glory in him, perceived by believers only, John i. 14. and in respect of that glory, the unbelieving world knew him not, ver. 10. But the spiritual knowledge of him they cannot have; it is above the reach of the carnal mind, Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." He may indeed discourse of them; but no other way than one can talk of honey or vinegar, who never tasted the sweetness of the one, nor the sourness of the other. He has some notions of spiritual truths, but sees not the things themselves, that are wrapt up in the word of truth, 1 Tim. i. 7. "Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." In a word, natural men fear, seek, confess they know not what. Thus may you see man's understanding naturally is overwhelmed with gross darkness in spiritual things.

*Thirdly,* There is in the mind of a man a natural bias to evil, whereby it comes to pass, that whatever difficulties he finds, while occupied about things truly good, it acts with a great deal of ease in evil; as being, in that case, in its own element, Jer. iv. 22. The carnal mind drives heavy

ly in the thoughts of good ; but furiously in the thoughts of evil. While holiness is before it, fetters are upon it ; but when it has got over the hedge, it is as the bird got out of the cage, and becomes a free-thinker indeed. Let us reflect a little on the apprehension and imagination of the carnal mind ; and we shall find incontestible evidence of this woful bias to evil.

*Evidence 1.* As when a man, by a violent stroke on the head, loseth his sight, there ariseth to him a kind of false light, whereby he perceiveth a thousand airy nothings ; so man being struck blind to all that is truly good, and for his eternal interest, has a light of another sort brought into his mind ; his eyes are opened, knowing evil, and so are the words of the tempter verified, Gen. iii. 5. The words of the Prophet are plain, " They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge," Jer. iv. 22. The mind of man has a natural dexterity to devise mischief ; none are so simple as to want skill to contrive ways to gratify their lusts, and ruin their souls ; though the power of every one's hand cannot reach to put their devices in execution. None needs to be taught this black art ; but as weeds grow up, of their own accord, in the neglected ground, so doth this wisdom, (which is *earthly, sensual, devilish*, James iii. 15.) grow up in the minds of men, by virtue of the corruption of their nature. Why should we be surprised with the product of corrupt wits ; their cunning devices to affront heaven, to oppose and run down truth and holiness, and to gratify their own and other mens lusts ? They row with the stream, no wonder they make great progress ; their stock is within them, and increaseth by using of it ; and the works of darkness are contrived with greater advantage, that the mind is wholly destitute of spiritual light, which, if it were in them, in any measure, would so far mar the work, 1 John iii. 9. " Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ;" he does it not as by art, for " his seed remaineth in him." But, on the other hand, " it is a sport for a fool to do mischief ; but a man of understanding hath wisdom," Prov. x. 23. " To do witty wickedness nicely," as the word imports, is as a sport, or a play to a fool ; it comes off with him easily ; and why, but because he is a fool, and hath not wisdom ; which would mar the con-

of their lusts. Thus the corrupt heart feeds itself with imagination sins : 'The unclean person is filled with speculative impurities, having eyes full of adultery; the covous man fills his heart with the world, though he cannot get his hands full of it; the malicious person, with delightful acts his revenge within his own breast; the envious man within his own narrow soul, beholds, with satisfaction, his neighbour laid low enough; and every lust finds in corrupt imagination a friend to it in time of need. At this it doth, not only when people are awake, but sometimes even when they are asleep; whereby it comes to pass, that these sins are acted in dreams which their hearts were carried out after, while they were awake. I know some do question the sinfulness of these things. But can it be thought they are consistent with that human nature and frame of spirit, which was in innocent Adam and in Jesus Christ, and should be in every man? Is the corruption of nature, then, that makes filthy dreams condemned, Jude 8. Solomon had experience of the exercise of grace in sleep; in a dream he prayed; in a dream he made the best choice; both were accepted of God, 1 Kings iii. 5—15. And if a man may, in sleep, do what is good and acceptable to God; why not he not also, when asleep, do that which is evil and displeasing to God? The same Solomon would have us not aware of this; and prescribes the best remedy against it, namely, the law upon the heart, Prov. vi. 20, "When thou sleepest (says he, ver. 22.) *it shall keep thee from wit, from the sinning in thy sleep* : That is, from sin in dreams. For one's being kept from sin (not his being kept from affliction) is the immediate proper effect of the law of God impressed upon the heart, Psal. cxix. 11. And thus the whole verse is to be understood, as appears from verse 23. "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life. Now, the law is a lamp of light, as it guides in the way of duty; and instructing reproofs from the law, are the way of life, as they keep from sin: Neither do they guide into the way of peace, but as they lead into the way of duty; nor do they keep a man out of trouble, but as they keep him from sin. And remarkable is the particular which Solomon instanceth, namely, the sin of uncleanness."

ness; To keep thee from the evil woman, verse 24. Which is to be joined with verse 22. including verse 23. in a parenthesis, as some versions have it. These things may suffice to convince us of the natural bias of the mind to evil.

*Fourthly*, There is in the carnal mind an opposition to spiritual truths, and an aversion to the receiving of them. It is as little a friend to divine truths, as it is to holiness. The truths of natural religion, which do, as it were, force their entry into the minds of natural men, they hold prisoners in unrighteousness, Rom. i. 18. And as for the truths of revealed religion, there is an evil heart of unbelief in them, which opposeth their entry; and there is an armed force necessary to captivate the mind to the belief of them, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. God has made a revelation of his mind and will to sinners, touching the way of salvation; he has given us the doctrine of his holy word: But do natural men believe it indeed? No, they do not; "For he that believeth not on the Son of God, believeth not God;" as is plain from 1 John v. 10. They believe not the promises of the word; they look on them, in effect only as fair words; for these that receive them, are thereby made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. The promises are as silver cords, let down from heaven, to draw sinners unto God, and to waft them over into the promised land; but they cast them from them. They believe not the threatenings of the word. As men travelling in deserts carry fire about with them, to fright away wild beasts; so God has made his law a fiery law, (Deut. xxxiii. 2.) hedging it about with threats of wrath: But men naturally are more brutish than beasts themselves; and will needs touch the fiery smoking mountain, though they should be thrust through with a dart. I doubt not but most, if not all of you, who are yet in the black state of nature, will here plead, Not guilty: But remember the carnal Jews in Christ's time were as confident as you are, that they believed Moses, John ix. 28, 29. But he confutes their confidence, roundly telling them, John v. 46. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me." Did ye believe the truths of God, ye durst not reject, as ye do, him who is truth itself. The very difficulty you find in assenting to this truth, bewrays that unbelief

I am charging you with. Has it not proceeded so far with some at this day, that it has steeled their foreheads with the impudence and impiety, openly to reject all revealed religion? Surely it is out of the abundance of the heart their mouth speaketh. But though ye set not your mouths against the heavens, as they do, the same bitter root of unbelief is in all men by nature, and reigns in you and will reign, till overcoming grace captivate your minds to the belief of the truth. To convince you in this point, consider these three things:

*Evidence 1.* How few are there who have been blessed with an inward illumination, by the special operation of the Spirit of Christ, letting them into a view of divine truths, in their spiritual and heavenly lustre! How have you learned the truths of religion, which ye pretend to believe! Ye have them merely by the benefit of external revelation, and of your education; so that you are Christians, just because you were not born and bred in a Pagan but in a Christian country. Ye are strangers to the inward work of the holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in your hearts; and so you cannot have the assurance of faith, with respect to that outward divine revelation made in the word, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, 12. And therefore, ye are still unbelievers. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," says our Lord, John vi. 45. Now ye have not come to Christ, therefore ye have not been taught of God; ye have not been so taught, and therefore ye have not come; ye believe not. Behold the revelation from which the faith even of the fundamental principles in religion doth spring, Matth. xvi. 17, 18. "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.—Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." If ever the Spirit of the Lord take a dealing with thee, to work in thee that faith, which is of the operation of God; it may be, as much time will be spent in razing the old foundation, as will make thee find a necessity of the working of his mighty power, and to enable thee to believe the very foundation principles, which now thou thinkest thou makest no doubt of, Eph. i. 19.

**Evid. 2.** How many professors have made shipwreck of their faith (such as it was) in time of temptation and trial! See how they fall, like stars from heaven, when Antichrist prevails, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. "God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth." They fell into damning delusions, because they never really believed the truth, though they themselves, and others too, thought they did believe it. That house is built upon the sand, and that faith is but ill-founded, that cannot bear out, but is quite overthrown, when the storm comes.

**Evid. 3.** Consider the utter inconsistency of most mens lives, with the principles of religion which they profess; ye may as soon bring east and west together, as their practice. Men believe that fire will burn them, and therefore they will not throw themselves into it: But the truth is, most men live as if they thought the gospel a mere fable; and the wrath of God revealed in his word against their unrighteousness and ungodliness, a mere scarecrow. If ye believe the doctrines of the word, how is it that ye are so unconcerned about the state of your souls before the Lord? How is it that you are so little concerned with that weighty point, whether ye be born again or not? Many live as they were born, and are like to die as they live, and yet live in peace. Do such believe the sinfulness and misery of a natural state? Do they believe they are *children of wrath*? Do they believe there is no salvation without regeneration? and no regeneration but what makes man a new creature? If you believe the promises of the word, why do you not embrace them, and labour to enter into the promised rest? What sluggard would not dig for a hid treasure, if he really believed he might so obtain it? Men will work and sweat for a maintenance; because they believe that by so doing they will get it; yet they will be at no tolerable pains for "the eternal weight of glory;" why, but because they do not believe the word of promise? Heb. iv. 1, 2. If you believe the threatenings, how is it that you live in your sins, live out of Christ, and yet hope for mercy? Do such believe God to be the holy and just one, who will *by no means clear the guilty*?



no, none believe, *none* (or next to none) *believe* ~~what~~ *that God the LORD is, and how severely he punishes* ~~et~~  
*Fifthly*, There is in the mind of man a natural *prone* ~~to~~  
*lies and falsehood*, which make for the safety of *lu* ~~st~~  
They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking *lie* ~~as~~  
*al. lvii. 3.* We have this with the rest of the *corr* ~~u~~  
on of our nature from our first parents. God *revela* ~~l~~  
ie truth to them; but through the solicitation of ~~t~~  
empter, they first doubted of it; they disbelieved it, ~~em~~  
embraced a lie instead of it. And for an incontesti ~~t~~  
evidence hercof, we may see that first article of the dev ~~i~~  
creed, *ye shall not surely die*, Gen. iii. 4. which was ~~em~~  
truded by him on our first parents, and by them receive ~~em~~  
naturally embraced by their posterity, and held fast, *ti* ~~em~~  
light from heaven oblige them to quit it. It spre ~~em~~  
itself through the lives of natural men; who till th ~~e~~  
consciences be awakened, walk after their own lusts; ~~em~~  
retaining the principle, *That they shall not surely die*. ~~A~~ ~~n~~  
this is often improved to that perfection, that the ~~em~~  
can say, over the belly of the denounced curse, "I ~~sh~~ ~~al~~  
have peace though I walk in the imagination of *m* ~~n~~  
heart, to add drunkenness to thirst," Deut. xxix. ~~11~~  
Whatever advantage the truths of God have over ~~er~~ ~~r~~  
by means of education, or otherwise; error has ~~alwa~~  
with the natural man this advantage against truth, ~~nam~~ ~~e~~  
ly, That there is something within him, which says, ~~that it were true~~: so the mind lies fair for assenting to  
And here is the reason of it. The true doctrine is, "t  
doctrine that is according to godliness," 1 Tim. vi.  
and "the truth which is after godliness," Tit. i. 1. ~~Er~~  
is the doctrine which is according to ungodliness;  
there is never an error in the mind, nor an untruth ven  
in the world, (in matters of religion,) but what has  
affinity with one corruption of the heart or other; acc  
ing to that of the apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 21. "They  
lieved not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousne  
So that truth and error being otherwise attended  
equal advantages for their reception, error, by this n  
has ready access to the minds of men in their n  
state. Wherefore, it is nothing strange that men  
the simplicity of gospel truths and institutions  
greedily embrace error and external pomp in rel

seeing they are so agreeable to the lusts of the heart, and the vanity of the mind of the natural man. And from hence also it is, that so many embrace atheistical principles; for none do it but in compliance with their irregular passions; none but these, whose advantage it would be, that there was no God.

*Lastly*, Man is naturally high minded; for when the gospel comes in power to him, it is employed in "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," 2 Cor. x. 5. Lowliness of mind is not a flower that grows in the field of nature; but is planted by the fingers of God in a renewed heart, and learned of the lowly Jesus. It is natural to man to think highly of himself, and what is his own; for the stroke he has got by his fall in Adam has produced a false light, whereby mole-hills about him appear like mountains; and a thousand airy beauties present themselves to his deluded fancy. *Vain men would be wise*, (so he accounts himself, and so he would be accounted of by others,) *though man be born like a wild ass's-colt*, Job xi. 12. His way is right, because it is his own; for, "every way of a man is right in his own eyes," Proverbs xxi. 2. His state is good, because he knows no better; he is alive without the law, Rom. vii. 9. and therefore his hope is strong, and his confidence firm. It is another tower of Babel reared up against heaven; and shall not fall while the power of darkness can hold it up. The word batters it, yet it stands; one while breaches are made in it, but they are quickly repaired; at another time, it is all made to shake; but still it keeps up; till either God himself, by his Spirit, rise an earthquake within the man, which tumbles it down, and leaves not one stone upon another, (2 Cor. x. 41, 45,) or death batter it down and raze the foundations of it, Luke xvi. 23. And as the natural man thinks highly of himself, so he thinks meanly of God, whatever he pretends, Psalm i. 21. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." The doctrine of the gospel and the mystery of Christ are foolishness to him; and in his practice he treats them as such, 1 Corin. i. 18. and ii. 14. He brings the word and the works of God, in the government of the world, before the bar of his carnal reason; and there they are presumptuously censured and condemned, Hos. xiv. 9.

Sometimes the ordinary restraint of providence is taken off, and Satan is permitted to stir up the carnal mind ; and in that case it is like an ant's nest, uncovered and disturbed ; doubts, denials, and hellish reasons crowd in it, and cannot be laid by all the arguments brought against them, till a power from on high captivate the mind, and still the mutiny of the corrupt principles.

Thus much of the corruption of the understanding ; which, although the half be not told, may discover to you the absolute necessity of regenerating grace. Call the understanding now Ichabod, for the glory is departed from it. Consider this, ye that are yet in the state of nature, and groan ye out your case before the Lord, that the Sun of righteousness may arise upon you, before you be shut up in everlasting darkness. What avails your worldly wisdom ? What do your attainments in religion avail, while your understanding lies yet wrapt up in its natural darkness, and confusion, utterly void of the light of life ? Whatever be the natural man's gifts or attainments, we must (as in the case of the leper, Lev. xlii. 24.) "pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in his head." But that is not all ; it is in his heart too, his will is corrupted, as I shall shew anon.

### *Of the Corruption of the Will.*

II. The will, that commanding faculty, (which sometimes was faithful, and ruled with God,) is now turned traitor, and rules with, and for the devil. God planted it in man wholly a right seed ; but now it is *turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine*. It was originally placed in a due subordination to the will of God, as was shewn before, but now it is gone wholly aside. However some do magnify the power of free-will, a view of the spirituality of the law, to which acts of moral discipline do in no ways answer ; and a deep insight into the corruption of nature, given by the inward operation of the Spirit, convincing of sin, righteousness, and judgment, would make men find an absolute need of the power of free grace, to remove the bands of wickedness from off the free-will. To open up this plague of the heart, I offer these following things to be considered :

*First*, There is, in the unrenewed will, an utter inability for what is truly good and acceptable in the sight

of God. The natural man's will is in Satan's fetters; hemmed in, within the circle of evil, and cannot move beyond it, more than a dead man can raise himself out of his grave, Eph. ii. 1. We deny him not a power to chuse, pursue, and act, what on the matter is good; but though he can will what is good and right, he can will nothing aright and well. John xv. 5. *Without me*, i. e. separate from me, as a branch from the stock, (as both the word and context do carry it,) *ye can do nothing*: to wit, nothing truly and spiritually good. His very choice and desire of spiritual things is carnal and selfish, John vi. 26. "Ye seek me because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." He not only comes not to Christ, but he cannot come, John vi. 44. And what can one do acceptable to God, who believeth not on him whom the Father hath sent? To evidence this inability for good in the unregenerate, consider these two things:

*Evid. 1.* How often does the light so shine before mens eyes, that they cannot but see the good they should chuse, and the evil they should refuse; and yet their hearts have no more power to comply with that light than if they were arrested by some invisible hand? They see what is right; yet they follow, and cannot but follow, what is wrong. Their conscience tells them the right way, and approves of it too; yet cannot their will be brought up to it; their corruption so chains them, that they cannot embrace it; so they sigh and go backward, over the belly of their light. And if it be not thus, how is it that the word, and way of holiness, meets with such entertainment in the world? How is it that clear arguments and reason on the side of piety and a holy life, which bear in themselves even on the carnal mind, do not bring men over to that side? Although the being of a heaven and a hell were but a *may-be*, it were sufficient to determine the will to the choice of holiness, were it capable to be determined thereto by mere reason: But men, knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit such things are worthy of death,) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them, Rom. i. 32. And how is it that these who magnify the power of free-will do not confirm their opinion before the world, by an ocular demonstration, in a practice as far above others in holiness, as the opinion of their natural ability is above others? Or

is it maintained only for the protection of lusts, which men may hold fast as long as they please ; and when they have no more use for them, can throw them off in a moment, and leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom ? Whatever use some make of that principle, it does of itself, and in its own nature, cast a broad shadow for a shelter to wickedness of heart and life. And it may be observed, that the generality of the hearers of the gospel, of all denominations, are plagued with it ; for it is a root of bitterness, natural to all men ; from whence do spring so much fearlessness about the soul's eternal state ; so many delays and off-puts in that weighty matter, whereby much work is laid up for a death-bed by some ; while others are ruined by a legal walk, and unacquaintedness with the life of faith, and the making use of Christ for sanctification ; all flowing from the persuasion of sufficient natural abilities. So agreeable is it to corrupt nature.

*Evid. 2.* Let those, who, by the power of the spirit of bondage, having had the law laid out before them, in its spirituality, for their conviction, speak and tell, if they found themselves able to incline their hearts towards it, in that case ; nay, if the more that light shone into their souls, they did not find their hearts more and more unable to comply with it. There are some, who have been brought unto the place of the breaking forth, who are yet in the devil's camp, that from their experience can tell, light let into the mind, cannot give life to the will, to enable it to comply therewith ; and could give their testimony here, if they would. But take Paul's testimony concerning it, who, in his unconverted state, was far from believing his utter inability for good ; but learned it by experience, Rom. vii. 9, 10, 11, 13. I own the natural man may have a kind of love to the law ; but here lies the stress of the matter, he looks on the holy law in a carnal dress ; and so, while he hugs a creature of his own fancy, he thinks he has the law, but in very deed he is without the law ; for as yet he sees it not in its spirituality : If he did, he would find it the very reverse of his own nature, and what his will could not fall in with, till changed by the power of grace.

*Secondly,* There is in the unrenewed will an averseness to good. Sin is the natural man's element ; he is loath to with it, as the fishes are to come out of the water into

and. He not only cannot come to Christ, but he will come, John v. 40. He is polluted, and hates to be bad, Jer. xiii. 27. "Wilt thou not be made clean? we shall it once be?" He is sick, but utterly averse to remedy; he loves his disease so, that he loaths the physician. He is a captive, a prisoner, and a slave; but loves his conqueror, his jailor and master; he is fond of fetters, prison, and drudgery; and has no liking to his liberty. For evidence of this averseness to good, in the case of man, I shall instance in some particulars.

*Evid. 1.* The untowardness of children. Do we not see them naturally lovers of sinful liberty? How unwilling they to be hedged in? How averse to restraint? The world can bear witness, that they are *as bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke*: and more, that it is far easier to bring young bullocks tamely to bear the yoke, than to bring young children under discipline, and make them tamely submit to the restraint of sinful liberty. Every body may see in this, as in a glass, that man is naturally wild and stubborn, according to Zophar's observe, Job xi. 12. that *man is born like a wild ass's colt*. What can be said more? He is like a colt, the colt of an ass, the colt of a wild ass. Compare Jer. ii. 24. "A wild ass used to the wilderness, he snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure, in her occasion he can turn her away?"

*Evid. 2.* What pain and difficulty do men often find in obliging their hearts to religious duties? And what a task it is to the carnal heart to abide at them? It is a pain to it, to leave the world but a little, to converse with God. It is not easy to borrow time from the many things, to bestow upon the one thing needful. Men often go to God in haste, with their faces towards the world; and when their duties are on the mount of ordinances, their hearts will be wandering at the foot of the hill, *going after their covetousness*, Jer. xxxiii. 31. They are soon wearied of well-doing; they find holy duties are not agreeable to their corrupt nature. They take notice of them at their worldly business, set them down with their carnal company, or let them be sucking the breasts of a lust; time seems to them to fly, and drive away so fast, so that it is gone ere they are aware. But how slowly does it drive, while a prayer, a sermon, or a Sabbath lasts? The Lord's day is the longest day of all the

week with many ; and, therefore, they must sleep longer that morning, and go sooner to bed that night, than ordinarily they do ; that the day may be made of a tolerable length ; for their hearts say within them, " When will the Sabbath be gone ? " Amos viii. 5. The hours of worship are the longest hours of that day ; hence when duty is over, they are like men eased of a burden ; and when sermon is ended, many have neither the grace nor the good manners to stay till the blessing be pronounced, but like the beasts, their head is away as soon as one puts his hand to loose them ; why, but because while they are at ordinances, they are as Doeg, " detained before the Lord," 1 Sam. xxii. 7.

*Evid. 3.* Consider how the will of the natural man doth *rebel against the light*, Job xxiv. 13. Fight sometimes entereth in, because he is not able to hold it out ; but he loveth darkness rather than light. Sometimes by the force of truth, the outer door of understanding is broken up ; but the inner door of the will remains fast bolted. Then lusts rise against light ; corruption and conscience encounter, and fight as in the field of battle ; till corruption getting the upper hand, conscience is forced to give back : Convictions are murdered ; and truth is made and held prisoner, so that it can create no more disturbance. While the word is preached or read, or the rod of God is upon the natural man, sometimes convictions are darted in on him, and his spirit is wounded, in greater or lesser measure : But these convictions not being able to make him fall, he runs away with the arrows sticking in his conscience ; and at length, one way or other, gets them out, and licks himself whole again. Thus, while the light shines, men, naturally averse to it, wilfully shut their eyes ; till God is provoked to blind them judicially, and they become proof against the word and providences too : So they may go where they will, they can sit at ease ; there is never a word from heaven to them, that goeth deeper than into their ears, Hos. iv. 17. " Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone."

*Evid 4.* Let us observe the resistance made by elect souls, when the Spirit of the Lord is at work, to bring them from the power of Satan unto God. Zion's King gets no subjects but by stroke of sword, in the day of his power, Psal. cx. 2, 3. None come to him, but

such as are drawn by a divine hand, John vi. 44. When the Lord comes to the soul, he finds the strong man, keeping the house, and a deep peace and security there, while the soul is fast asleep in the devil's arms. But the prey must be taken from the mighty, and the captive delivered. Therefore, the Lord awakens the sinner, opens his eyes, and strikes him with terror, while the clouds are black above his head, and the sword of vengeance is held to his breast. Now he is at no small pains to put a fair face on a black heart, to shake off his fears, to make head against them, and to divert himself from thinking on the unpleasant and ungrateful subject of his soul's ease. If he cannot so rid himself from them, carnal reason is called in to help, and urgeth that there is no ground for so great fear; all may be well enough yet; and if it be ill with him, it will be ill with many. When the sinner is beat from this, and sees no advantage of going to hell with company, he resolves to leave his sins, but cannot think of breaking off so soon; there is time enough, and he will do it afterwards. Conscience says, *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*: but he cries, *To-morrow, Lord, to-morrow, Lord*; and, *Just now, Lord*; till that now is never like to come. And thus, many times, he comes from his prayers and confessions, with nothing but a breast full of sharper convictions; for the heart doth not always cast up the sweet morsel, as soon as confession is made with the mouth, Judges x. 10—16. And when conscience obligeth them to part with some lusts, others are kept as right eyes and right hands; and there are rueful looks after those that are put away, as it was with the Israelites, who, with bitter hearts, did remember the fish they did eat in Egypt freely, Num. xi. 5. Nay, when he is so pressed, that he must needs say before the Lord, that he is content to part with all his idols; the heart will be giving the tongue the lie. In a word, the soul in this case will shift from one thing to another, like a fish with the hook in his jaws, till it can do no more; and power come to make it succumb, as *the wild ass in her month*, Jer. ii. 24.

*Thirdly*, There is in the will of man a natural proneness to evil, a woful bent towards sin. Men naturally are bent to backsliding from God, Hos. ii. 7. They hang (as the word is) towards backsliding; even as a



a stone, yea, harder than the nether mill-stone, in point of receiving of them ; it is otherwise unstable as water, and cannot keep them. It works against the receiving of them ; and when they are made, it works them off, and returns to its natural bias, Hos. vi. 4. "Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew, it goeth away." The morning cloud promiseth a hearty shower, but, when the sun ariseth, it evanisheth ; the sun beats upon the early dew, and it evaporates ; so the husbandman's expectation is disappointed. Such is the goodness of the natural man. Some sharp affliction, or piercing conviction, obligeth him, in some sort, to turn from his evil course ; but his will not being renewed, religion is still against the grain with him, and therefore this goes off again, Psal. lxxviii. 34, 36, 37. Though a stone thrown up into the air may abide there a little while ; yet its natural heaviness will bring it down to the earth again ; and so do unrenewed men return to the wallowing in the mire ; because although they were washed, yet their swinish nature was not changed. It is hard to cause wet wood take fire, hard to make it keep fire ; but it is harder than either of these to make the unrenewed will retain attained goodness ; which is a plain evidence of the natural bent of the will to evil.

*Evid. last.* Do the saints serve the Lord now, as they were wont to serve sin in their unconverted state ? Very far from it, Rom. vi. 20. "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." Sin got all, and admitted no partner ; but now, when they are the servants of Christ, are they free from sin ? Nay, there are still with them some deeds of the old man, shewing that he is but dying in them. And hence their hearts often misgive them, and slip aside unto evil, when they would do good, Rom. viii. 21. They need to watch, and keep their hearts with all diligence ; and their sad experience teaching them, that "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," Prov. xxviii. 26. If it be thus in the green tree, how must it be in the dry ?

*Fourthly,* There is a natural contrariety, direct opposition and enmity, in the will of man, to God himself, and his holy will, Rom. viii. 7. "The carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God,

neither indeed can be." The will was once God's deputy in the soul, set to command there for him ; but now it is set up against him. If you would have the picture of it, in its natural state, the very reverse of the will of God represents it. If the fruit hanging before one's eyes be but forbidden, that is sufficient to draw the heart after it. Let me instance in the sin of profane swearing and cursing, to which some are so abandoned, that they take a pride in them ; belching out horrid oaths and curses, as if hell opened with the opening of their mouths, or larding their speeches with minced oaths, as *faith, hath, fai'd ye, hai'd ye*, and such like ; and all this without any manner of provocation, though even that would not excuse them. Pray tell me, (1.) What profit is there here ? A thief gets something in his hand for his pains ; a drunkard gets a belly-full ; but what do ye get ? Others serve the devil for pay ; but ye are volunteers, that expect no reward, but your work itself, in affronting of heaven. And if you repent not, you will get your reward in full tale ; when ye go to hell, your work will follow you. The drunkard shall not have a drop of water to cool his tongue there. Nor will the covetous man's wealth follow him into the other world ; but ye shall drive on your old trade there. And an eternity shall be long enough to give you your heart's fill of it. (2.) What pleasure is there here, but what flows from your trampling upon the holy law ? Which of your senses doth swearing or cursing gratify ? If it gratify your ears, it can only be by the noise it makes against the heavens. Though you had a mind to give up yourselves to all manner of profanity and sensuality, there is so little pleasure can be strained out of these, that we must needs conclude, your love to them, in this case, is a love to them for themselves ; a devilish unhired love, without any prospect of profit or pleasure from them otherwise. If any shall say, these are monsters of men. Be it so ; yet, alas ! the world is fruitful of such monsters ; they are to be found almost everywhere. And allow me to say, They must be admitted as the mouth of the whole unregenerate world against heaven, Rom. iii. 14. " Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness," ver. 19. " Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the

law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

I have a charge against every unregenerate man and woman, young or old, to be verified by the testimonies of the Scriptures of truth, and the testimony of their own consciences; namely, that whether they be professors or profane, whatever they be, seeing they are not born again, they are heart-enemies to God; to the Son of God, to the Spirit of God, and to the law of God. Hear this, ye careless souls, that live at ease in your natural state.

1st. Ye are enemies to God in your minds, Col. i. 21. Ye are not as yet reconciled to him, the natural enmity is not as yet slain, though perhaps it lies hid, and ye do not perceive it. (1.) Ye are enemies to the very being of God, Psal. xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." The proud man would that none were above himself; the rebel, that there were no King; and the unrenewed man, who is a mass of pride and rebellion, that there were no God. He saith it in his heart, he wisheth it were so, though he be ashamed and afraid to speak it out. And that all natural men are such fools, appears from the Apostle's quoting a part of this Psalm, "That every mouth may be stopped," Rom. iii. 10, 11, 12, 19. I own indeed, that while the natural man looks on God as the Creator and Preserver of the world; because he loves his ownself, therefore his heart riseth not against the being of his benefactor: But this enmity will quickly appear, when he looks on God as the Rector and Judge of the world; binding him, under the pain of the curse, to exact holiness, and girding him with the cords of death, because of his sin. Listen in this case to the voice of the heart, and you will find it to be, *No God*. (2.) Ye are enemies to the nature of God, Job. xxi. 14. "They say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Men set up to themselves an idol of their own fancy instead of God, and then fall down and worship it. They love him no other way, than Jacob loved Leah, while he took her for Rachel. Every natural man is an enemy to God, as he is revealed in his word. An infinitely holy, just, powerful, and true Being, is not the God whom he loves, but the God whom he loaths. In effect men naturally are haters of God, Rom. i. 30. And

if they could, they certainly would make him another than what he is. For, consider it is a certain truth, that whatsoever is in God, is God; and, therefore, his attributes or perfections are not any thing really distinct from himself. If God's attributes be not himself, he is a compound being, and so not the first Being; (which to say is blasphemous,) for the parts compounding are before the compound itself; but he is "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last."

Now upon this I would, for your conviction, propose to your consciences a few queries: (1.) How stand your hearts affected to the infinite purity and holiness of God? Conscience will give an answer to this, which the tongue will not speak out. If ye be not partakers of his holiness, ye cannot be reconciled to it. The Pagans finding they could not be like God in holiness, made their gods like themselves in filthiness; and thereby discovered what sort of a god the natural man would have. God is holy; can an unholy creature love his unspotted holiness? Nay, it is the righteous only that can "give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness," Psal. lxxxvii. 12. God is light; can creatures of darkness rejoice therein? Nay, "every one that doth evil hateth the light," John iii. 29. For, "What communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Cor. vi. 14. (2.) How stand your hearts affected to the justice of God? There is not a man, who is wedded to his lusts, as all the unregenerate are, but would be content with the blood of his body, to blot that letter out of the name of God. Can the malefactor love his condemning judge? Or an unjustified sinner a just God? No, he cannot, Luke vii. 47. "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Hence seeing men cannot get the doctrine of his justice blotted out of the Bible, it is such an eyesore to them, that they strive to blot it out of their minds. And they ruin themselves by presuming on his mercy, while they are not careful to get a righteousness, wherein they may stand before his justice; but "say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil," Zeph. i. 12. (3.) How stand ye affected to the omniscience and omnipresence of God? Men naturally would rather have a blind idol, than an all-seeing God; and, therefore, do what they can, as Adam did, to hide

themselves from the presence of the Lord. They no more love an all-seeing, every-where-present God, than a thief loves to have the judge witness to his evil-deeds. It could be carried by votes, God would be voted out of the world, and closed up in heaven : For the language of a carnal heart is, " The Lord seeth us not ; the Lord hath forsaken the earth," Ezek. viii. 12. (4.) How stand ye affected to the truth and veracity of God ? There are few in the world, that can heartily subscribe to that sentence of the Apostle, Rom. iii. 4. " Let God be true, every man a liar." Nay truly, there are many, who effectually do hope that God will not be true to his word. There are thousands who hear the gospel, that hope to be saved, and think all safe with them for eternity, who never had any experience of the new birth, nor do at all discern themselves in that question, Whether they are saved again or not ? A question that is like to wear out itself among us at this day. Our Lord's words are plain and peremptory, " Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." What are such hopes then, but real hopes that God (with profoundest reverence to be spoken) will recall his word, and that Christ will prove a false prophet ? What else means the sinner, who, " when he heareth the words of the curse, blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart ?" Deut. xxix. 19. *La* How stand ye affected to the power of God ? None of the new creatures will love him for it, on a fair view thereof, though others may slavishly fear him upon the account of it. There is not a natural man but would contrive to the utmost of his power, to the building of another tower of Babel, to hem it in. On these grounds, I declare every unrenewed man an enemy to God.

*2dly*, Ye are enemies to the Son of God. That enmity to Christ is in your hearts, which would have prevented you from joining the husbandmen, who killed the heir, and cast him out of the vineyard ; if ye had been beset with their temptations, and no more restrained than they were. *Am I a* you will say, to have so treated my sweet Saviour ? said Hazael in another case ; but when he had the temptation, he was a dog to do it. Many call Christ their sweet Saviour, whose consciences can bear witness,

never sucked so much sweetness from him, as from their sweet lusts, which are ten times sweeter to them than their Saviour. He is no other way sweet to them than as they abuse his death and sufferings, for the peaceable enjoyment of their lusts ; that they may live as they list in the world ; and when they die, may be kept out of hell. Alas ! it is but a mistaken Christ that is sweet to you, whose souls loathe that Christ, who " is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." It is with you as it was in the carnal Jews, who delighted in him while they mistook his errand into the world, fancying that he would be a temporal deliverer to them, Mal. iii. 1. But when he was come, and " sat as a refiner and purifier of silver," ver. 2. 3. and cast them as reprobate silver, who thought to have had no small honour in the kingdom of the Messiah ; his doctrine galled their consciences, and they rested not till they imbrued their hands in his blood. To open your eyes in this point, which ye are so lothe to believe, I will lay before you the enmity of your hearts against Christ and all his offices.

1. Every unregenerate man is an enemy to Christ in his prophetic office. He is appointed of the Father, the great Prophet and Teacher ; but not upon the world's call, who, in their natural state, would have unanimously voted against him : And, therefore, when he came, he was condemned as a seducer and blasphemer. For evidence of this enmity, I will instance in two things.

*Evid. 1.* Consider the entertainment he meets with, when he comes to teach souls inwardly by his Spirit. Men do what they can to stop their ears, like the deaf adder, that they may not hear his voice. They always resist the Holy Ghost. " They desire not the knowledge of his ways ;" and, therefore, bid him depart from them. The old calumny is often raised upon him, on that occasion, John x. 20. " He is mad, why hear ye him ?" Soul exercise raised by the spirit of bondage, is accounted by many nothing else but distraction, and melancholy fits ; men thus blaspheming the Lord's work, because they themselves are beside themselves, and cannot judge of these matters.

*Evid. 2.* Consider the entertainment he meets with, when he comes to teach men outwardly by his word.

(1.) His written word, the Bible, is slighted; Christ hath left it to us, as the book of our instructions, to show us what way we must steer our course, if we would come to Emmanuel's land. It is a lamp to light us through a dark world to eternal light. And he hath left it upon us, to search it with that diligence wherewith men dig into mines for silver and gold, John v. 39. But, ah! how is this sacred treasure profaned by many! They ridicule the holy word, by which they must be judged at the last day; and will rather lose their souls than their jest, dressing up the conceit of their wanton wits in scripture-phrases; in which they act as mad a part, as one who would dig into a mine to procure metal to melt, and pour down his own and his neighbour's throat. Many exhaust their spirits in reading romances, and their minds pursue them, as the flame doth the dry stubble; while they have no heart for, nor relish of the holy word, and therefore seldom take a Bible in their hands. What is agreeable to the vanity of their minds is pleasant and taking: But what recommends holiness to their unholy hearts, makes their spirits dull and flat. What pleasure will they find in reading of a profane ballad, or story book, to whom the Bible is tasteless, as the white of an egg! Many lay by their Bibles with their Sabbath day's clothes; and whatever use they have for their clothes, they have none for their Bibles, till the return of the Sabbath. Alas! the dust or finery about your Bibles is a witness now, and will, at the last day, be a witness of the enmity of your hearts against Christ as a prophet. Besides all this, among these who ordinarily read the scriptures, how few are there that read it as the word of the Lord to their souls, and keep communion with him in it. They do not make his statutes their counsellors, nor doth their particular case send them to their Bibles. They are strangers to the solid comfort of the scriptures. And if at any time they be dejected, it is something else than the word that revives them: As Ahab was cured of his sullen fit, by the securing of Naboth's vineyard for him.

(2.) Christ's word preached is despised. The entertainment most of the world, to whom it has come, have always given it, is that which is mentioned, Mat. xxii. 5. They made light of it. And for its sake they are despised whom he has employed to preach it; whatever other face men

put upon their contempt of the ministry, John xv. 20. "The servant is not greater than his Lord ; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you ; if they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake." That Levi was the son of the hated, seems not to have been without a mystery, which the world in all ages hath unriddled. But though the earthen vessel, wherein God has put the treasure, be turned, with many, into vessels wherein there is no pleasure, yet why is the treasure itself slighted ? But slighted it is, and that with a witness this day. Lord, who hath believed our report ? To whom shall we speak ? Men can, without remorse, make to themselves silent Sabbaths, one after another. And, alas ! when they come to ordinances, for the most part, it is but to appear (as the word is, to be seen) before the Lord, and to tread his courts, namely, as a company of beasts would do, if they were driven into them, Isa. i. 12. So little reverence and awe of God appears on their spirits. Many stand like brazen walls before the word, in whose corrupt conversation the preaching of the word makes no breach. Nay, not a few are growing worse and worse, under precept upon precept ; and the result of all is, " They go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken," Isa. xxviii. 13. What tears of blood are sufficient to lament that (the gospel) the grace of God is thus received in vain ! We are but the voice of one crying ; the speaker is in heaven ; and speaks to you from heaven by men ; why do ye refuse him that speaketh ? Heb. xii. 25. God has made our Master hear of all things, and we are sent to court a spouse for him. There is none so worthy as he ; none more unworthy than they to whom this match is promised ; but the prince of darkness is preferred before the Prince of peace. A dismal darkness overclouded the world by Adam's fall, more terrible than if the sun, moon, and stars, had been for ever wrapt up in blackness of darkness ; and there we should have eternally lain, had not this grace of the gospel, as a shining sun, appeared to dispel it, Tit. ii. 11. But yet we fly like night-owls from it ; and like the wild beasts, lay ourselves down in our dens ; when the sun ariseth, we are struck blind with the light thereof ; and, as creatures of darkness, love darkness rather than light.



Such is the enmity of the hearts of men against Christ, in his prophetic office.

2. The natural man is an enemy to Christ in his priestly office. He is appointed of the Father *a Priest for ever*, that by his alone sacrifice and intercession, sinners may have peace with, and access to God ; but Christ crucified is a stumbling-block, and foolishness to the unrenowned part of mankind, to whom he is preached, 1 Cor. i. 23. They are not for him, as the new and living way. Nor is he, by the voice of the world, an high Priest over the house of God. Corrupt nature goes quite another way to work

*Evidence 1.* None of Adam's children naturally incline to receive the blessing in borrowed robes ; but would all ways, according to the spider's motto, owe all to themselves ; and so climb up to heaven on a thread spun out of their own bowels. For they "desire to be under the law," Gal. iv. 24. And "go about to establish their own righteousness, Rom. x. 3. Man, naturally, looks on God as a great Master ; and himself, as his servant, that must work and win heaven as his wages. Hence, when conscience is awakened, he thinks, that, to the end he may be saved, he must answer the demands of the law ; serve God as well as he can, and pray for mercy wherein he comes short. And thus many come to duties, that never come out of them to Jesus Christ.

*Evid. 2.* As men, naturally, think highly of their duties, that seem to them to be well done ; so they look for acceptance with God according as their work is done, not according to the share they have in the blood of Christ "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?" They will value themselves on their performances and attainments ; yea, their very opinions in religion, (Phil. ii. 4, 5, 6, 7.) taking to themselves what they rob from Christ the great High Priest.

*Evid. 3.* The natural man, going to God in duties, will always be found either to go without a Mediator, or with more than the only Mediator, Jesus Christ. Nature is blind, and therefore venturous : It sets a man a-going immediately to God without Christ ; to rush into his presence, and put their petitions in his hand, without being introduced by the secretary of heaven, or putting their requests into his hand. So fixed is this disposition in the unrenowned

heart, that when many hearers of the gospel are conversed with upon the point of their hopes of salvation, the name of Christ will scarcely be heard from their mouths. Ask them how they think to obtain the pardon of sin? they will tell you, they beg and look for mercy, because God is a merciful God; and that is all they have to confide in. Others look for mercy for Christ's sake; but how do they know that Christ will take their plea in hand? Why, as the Papists have their mediators with the Mediator, so have they. They know he cannot but do it; for they pray, confess, mourn, and have great desires, and the like; and so have something of their own to commend them unto him: They were never made poor in spirit, and brought empty-handed to Christ, to lay the stress of all on his atoning blood.

3. The natural man is an enemy to Christ in his kingly office. The Father has appointed the Mediator King in Zion, Psalm ii. 6. And all to whom the gospel comes are commanded, on their highest peril, to kiss the Son, and submit themselves unto him, ver. 12. But the natural voice of mankind is, *Away with him*, as you may see, ver. 3. 3. "They will not have him to reign over them," Luke xix. 14.

*Evid. 1.* The workings of corrupt nature to wrest the government out of his hands. No sooner was he born, but being born a king, Herod persecuted him, Matth. ii. And when he was crucified, they set up over his head his accusation, written, *This is Jesus, the King of the Jews*, Matth. xxvii. 37. Though his kingdom be a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world; yet, they cannot allow him a kingdom within a kingdom, which acknowledgeth no other head or supreme, but the royal Mediator. They make bold with his royal prerogatives, changing his laws, institutions, and ordinances, modelling his worship according to the devices of their own hearts; introducing new offices and officers into his kingdom, not to be found in the book of the manner of his kingdom; disposing of the external government thereof, as may best suit their carnal designs. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men against Zion's King.

*Evid. 2.* How unwilling are men, naturally, to submit unto, and be hedged in by the laws and discipline of his kingdom! As a king, he is a law-giver, (Isa. xxxiii. 22.) and has appointed an external government, discipline, and

Now here is a three-fold cord against heaven and hell, not easily broken ; a blind mind, a perverse will, disorderly distempered affections. The mind swelled with self-conceit, says the man should not stoop ; the will, posite to the will of God, says he will not ; and the corrupt affections, rising against the Lord, in defence of corrupt will, say, he shall not. Thus the poor creature stands out against God and goodness, till a day of peace come, in which he is made a new creature.

IV. The conscience is corrupt and defiled, Tit. i. It is an evil eye, that fills one's conversation with darkness and confusion ; being naturally unable to do office ; till the Lord, by letting in a new light to the soul, awaken the conscience ; it remains sleepy and inactive. Conscience can never do its work, but according to the light it hath to work by. Wherefore, seeing the natural man cannot spiritually discern spiritual things, (1 Cor. 14.) the conscience naturally is quite useless in that point ; being cast into such a deep sleep, that nothing but a saving illumination from the Lord can set it on work in that matter. The light of the natural conscience, good and evil, sin and duty, is very defective ; there though it may check for grosser sins, yet, as to the more subtle workings of sin, it cannot check them, because it discerns them not. Thus, conscience will fly in the face of many, if at any time they be drunk, swear, neglect prayer, or be guilty of any gross sin ; who otherwise have profound peace ; though they live in the sin of unbelief, are strangers to spiritual worship, and the life of heaven. And natural light being but faint and languishing in such things which it doth reach, conscience in that case is like a stitch in one's side, which quickly goes off ; its exhortations to duty, and checks for and struggles against sin are very remiss, which the natural man easily gets over. But, because there is a false light in the dark mind of the natural conscience following the same, will call *evil* for *good* and *good* for *evil*, Isa. v. 20. And so it is often found like a blind and furious horse, which doth violently run down itself, his rider, and all that doth come in his way, John 2. " Whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth you service." When the natural conscience is awakened by the Spirit of conviction, it will indeed rage and roar,

put the whole man in a dreadful consternation, awfully summon all the powers of the soul to help in a strait; make the stiff heart to tremble, and the knees to bow; set the eyes a-weeping, the tongue a-confessing; and oblige the man to cast out the goods into the sea, which it apprehends are like to sink the ship of the soul, though the heart still goes after them. But yet it is an evil conscience which naturally leads to despair, and will do it effectually, as in Judas' case; unless either lusts prevail over it, to lull it asleep, as in the case of Felix, Acts xxiv. 25. or the blood of Christ prevail over it, sprinkling and purging it from dead works, as in the case of all true converts, Heb. ix. 14. and x. 23. *Lastly*, Even the memory bears evident marks of this corruption. What is good and worthy to be minded, as it makes but slender impression, so that impression easily wears off; the memory, as a leaking vessel, lets it slip, Heb. ii. 1. As a sieve that is full, when in the water, lets all go when it is taken out; so is the memory, with respect to spiritual things. But, how does it retain what ought to be forgotten? Naughty things so bear in themselves upon it, that though men would fain have them out of mind, yet they stick there like glue. However forgetful men be in other things, it is hard to forget an injury. So the memory often furnishes new fuel to old lusts; makes men in old age to re-act the sins of their youth, while it presents them again to the mind with delight, which thereupon licks up the former vomit. And thus, it is like the riddle, that lets through the pure grain, and keeps the refuse. Thus far of the corruption of the soul.

The body itself also is partaker of this corruption and defilement, so far as it is capable thereof. Wherefore the Scripture calls it sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3. We may take this up in two things. (1.) The natural temper, or rather distemper of the bodies of Adam's children, as it is an effect of original sin; so it hath a native tendency to sin, incites to sin, leads the soul into snares, yea, is itself a snare to the soul. The body is a furious beast, of such metal, that if it be not beat down, kept under, and brought into subjection, it will cast the soul into much sin and misery, 1 Cor. ix. 27. There is a vileness in the body, (Phil. iii. 21.) which, as to the saints, will never be removed, until it be melted down in a grave, and cast into a new mould,

sum of the gospel religion is, to deny ourselves, and to do good from and for Christ, Philip. i. 21.

*Thirdly,* Every thing in nature is against believing Jesus Christ. What beauty can the blind man discern a crucified Saviour, for which he is to be desired? He can the will, naturally impotent, yea, and averse to good, make choice of him? Well may the soul then say to him in the day of the spiritual siege, as the Jebusites said David in another case, "Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither," 2 Sam. v. The way of nature is to go into one's self for all; according to the fundamental maxim of unsanctified morality. That a man should trust in himself; which, according to the doctrine of faith, is mere foolishness. For so it is determined, Prov. xviii. 26. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Now, faith is the soul's going out of itself for all; and this nature, on the other hand, determined to be foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 18, 23. Wherefore there need of the working of mighty power, to cause sinners to believe, Eph. i. 19. Isa. liii. 1. We see promises of we come to sinners, in the gospel covenant, are ample, large and free, clogged with no conditions, Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xx. 17. If they cannot believe his bare word, he has given them his oath upon it, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And for the greater assurance, he has appended seals to his sworn covenant, namely, the holy sacraments. So that no more could be demanded of the most faithless person in the world, to make us believe him, than the Lord hath commanded to give us, to make us believe himself. This plainly speaks nature to be against believing, and these who flee to Christ for refuge, to have need of strong consolation (Heb. vi. 18.) to blame their strong doubts, and propensity to unbelief. Farther, also, it may be observed, how, in the word sent to a secure, graceless generation, their objections are answered aforehand; and words of grace are heaped one upon another, as ye may read, Isa. lv. 7, 8; Joel ii. 13. Why? Because the Lord knows, that while these secure sinners are thoroughly awakened, doubt fears, and carnal reasonings against believing, will be going within their breasts, as thick as dust in a house, raised by sweeping a dry floor.

*Lastly,* Corrupt nature is bent towards the way of th

head, in the covenant of works ; we were in him seminal-ly, as our natural head ; hence we fell in him, and by his disobedience were made sinners, as Levi, in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes, Heb. vii. 9. His first sin is imputed to us ; therefore, justly are we left under the want of his original righteousness, which, being given to him as a common person, he cast off, by his sin ; and this is necessarily followed, in him and us, by the corruption of the whole nature ; righteousness and corruption being two contraries, one of which must needs always be in man, as a subject capable thereof. And Adam, our common father, being corrupt, we are so too ; for, “ Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? ”

Although it is sufficient to evince the righteousness of this dispensation, that it was from the Lord, who doth all things well ; yet, to silence the murmurings of proud nature, let these few things further be considered. (1.) In the covenant wherein Adam represented us, eternal happiness was promised to him and his posterity, upon condition of his (that is, Adam's) perfect obedience, as the representative for all mankind ; whereas, if there had been no covenant, they could not have pleaded eternal life, upon their most perfect obedience, but might have been, after all, reduced to nothing, notwithstanding, by natural justice, they would have been liable to God's eternal wrath, in case of sin. Who, in that case, would not have consented to that representation ? (2.) Adam had a power to stand given him, being made upright. He was as capable to stand for himself, and all his posterity, as any after him could be for themselves. This trial of mankind, in their head, would soon have been over, and the crown won to them all, had he stood ; whereas, had his posterity been independent on him, and every one left to act for himself, the trial would have been continually a-carrying on, as men came into the world. (3.) He had natural affections the strongest to engage him, being our common father. (4.) His own stock was in the ship, his all lay at stake as well as ours. He had no separate interest from ours ; for, if he forgot ours, he behoved to have forgot his own. (5.) If he had stood, we should have had the light of his mind, the righteousness of his will, and holiness of his affections, with entire purity transmitted unto us ; we could not have fallen ; the

principally opposed by corrupt nature. One may well that of all errors in religion, since Christ, the seed o woman, was preached, this of works, in opposition to grace in him, was the first that lived ; and it is likely the last that dies. There have been vast numbers of er which sprung up, one after another, whereof at le the world became ashamed and weary ; so that they out. But this has continued from Cain, the first auth this heresy, unto this day ; and never wanted some clave to it, even in the times of greatest light. I do without ground, call Cain the author of it : For, Abel brought the sacrifice of atonement, a bloody offi of the firstlings of his flock, (like the Publican, *amittis his breast*, and saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*,) advanced with his thank-offering of the first-fruit o ground, (Gen. iv. 3, 4.) like the proud Pharisee, wit *God I thank thee*. For what was the cause of Cain's w and of his murdering of Abel ? Was it not that he w cepted of God for his work ? Gen. iv. 4, 5. " And w fore slew he him ? Because his own works were evil his brother's righteous, 1 John iii. 22. That is, do faith, and accepted ; when his were done without fait therefore rejected, as the Apostle teacheth, Heb. And so he wrote his indignation against justificatio acceptance with God through faith, in opposition to w in the blood of his brother, to convey it down to post And since that time, the unbloody sacrifice has often s med in the blood of those that rejected it. The pr made to Abraham, of the *seed* in which all nations s be blessed, was so overclouded among his poster Egypt, that the generality of them saw no need o way of obtaining the blessing, till God himself con their error, by a fiery law from mount Sinai, " whic added because of transgressions, till the seed should ce Gal. iii. 19. I need not insist to tell you, how Mose the Prophets had still much ado, to lead the people c conceit of their own righteousness ; Deut. xi: is en spent on that purpose. They were very gross in that in our Saviour's time. In the time of the Apostles, the doctrine of free grace was most clearly preached error lifted up its head, in face of clearest light ; w the Epistle to the Romans and Galatians : And, since *time*, it has not been wanting ; Popery being the cor

former heresies, and this the heart and life of that doctrine. And, finally, it may be observed, that always as the law declined from her purity otherwise, the doctrine of grace was obscured proportionably.

Such is the natural propensity of man's heart, to the law in opposition to Christ; that, as the taintsel turns the taste of the purest liquor put into it, so the natural man turns the very gospel into law; and transcribes the covenant of grace into a covenant of works. The ceremonial law was to the Jews a real gospel; which blood, death, and translation of guilt before their eyes usually, as the only way of salvation: Yet their very *i. e.* their altar, with the several ordinances pertaining thereto, (Mal. i. 12.) was a *snare unto them*, Rom. ii. While they use it to make up the defects in their obedience to the moral law, and cleave to it so, as to reject whom the altar and sacrifices pointed them to, as the substance of all: Even as Hagar, whose it was only because, was by their father brought into her mistress's house not without a mystery in the purpose of God, *for there are the two covenants*, Gal. iv. 24. Thus is the doctrine of the gospel corrupted by Papists, and other enemies of the doctrine of free grace. And, indeed, however nations' heads may be set right in this point, as surely as they are out of Christ, their faith, repentance and obedience, (such as they are,) are placed by them in the room of Christ and his righteousness, and so trusted to, as if by them they fulfilled a new law.

Great is the difficulty in Adam's sons their parting from the law, as a covenant of works. None part with it at respect, but those whom the power of the Spirit of God separates from it. The law is our first husband, and its every one's virgin love. When Christ comes to us, he finds it married to the law; so as it neither can nor will be married to another, till it be obliged to leave the first husband, as the apostle teacheth, Rom. 7. 2, 3, 4. Now that ye may see what sort of a parting this is, consider,

It is a death, Rom. vii. 4. Gal. iii. 19. Intreatment will not prevail with the soul here; it saith to the first husband, as Ruth to Naomi, "The Lord do so to me, ere also, if I ought but death part thee and me." And their inners are true to their word; they die to the law,



ere they be married to Christ. Death is hard to every body : But what difficulty do ye imagine must a loving wife, on her death-bed, find in parting with her husband, the husband of her youth, and with the dear children she has brought forth to him : The law is that husband ; all the duties performed by the natural man are these children. What a struggle, as for life, will be in the heart ere they be got parted. I may have occasion to touch upon this afterwards. In the mean time, take the Apostle's short, but pithy description of it, Rom. x. 3. " For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." They go about to establish their own righteousness, like an eager disputant in schools, seeking to establish the point in question ; or like a tormentor, extorting a confession from one upon the rack. They go about to establish it to make it stand : their righteousness is like a house built upon the sand : it cannot stand, but they will have it to stand : It falls ; they set it up again : But still it tumbles down on them ; yet they cease not to go about to make it stand. But wherefore all this pains about a tottering righteousness ? Because, such as it is, it is their own. What ails them at Christ's righteousness ? Why, that would make them free grace's debtors for all, and that is what the proud heart by no means can submit to. Here lies the stress of the matter, Psal. x. 4. The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek, (to read it without the supplement,) that is, in other terms, " He cannot dig, and to beg he is ashamed." Such is the struggle ere the soul die to the law. But what speaks yet more of this woful disposition of the heart, nature oft-times gets the mastery of the disease ; insomuch that the soul, which was like to have died to the law, while convictions were sharp and piercing, fatally recovers of the happy and promising sickness ; and (what is very natural) cleaves more closely than ever to the law, even as a wife brought back from the gates of death would cleave to her husband. This is the issue of the exercise of many about their souls case : They are indeed brought to follow duties more closely ; but they are as far from Christ as ever, if not farther.

(2.) It is a violent death, Rom. vii. 4. " Ye are become dead to the law," being killed, slain, or put to

death, as the word bears. The law itself has a great hand in this; the husband gives the wound, Gal. ii. 19. "I through the law am dead to the law." The soul that dies this death, is like a loving wife matched with a rigorous husband. She does what she can to please him, yet he is never pleased; but tosseth, harasseth, and beats her, till she break her heart, and death sets her free; as will afterwards more fully appear. Thus it is made evident, that mens hearts are naturally bent to the way of the law, and lie cross to the gospel-contrivance; and the second article of the charge, against you that are unregenerate, is verified, namely, that ye are enemies to the Son of God.

*3dly*, Ye are enemies to the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of holiness: The natural man is unholy, and loves to be so, and therefore *resists the Holy Ghost*, Acts vii. 51. The work of the Spirit is to convince the world of *sin, righteousness, and judgment*, John xvi. 8. But O how do men strive toward off these convictions, as ever they would ward off a blow, threatening their loss of a right eye, or a right hand! If the Spirit of the Lord dart them in, so as they cannot evite them; the heart says, in effect, as Ahab to Elijah, whom he both hated and feared, *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* And indeed they treat him as an enemy, doing their utmost to stifle convictions, and to murder these harbingers, that come to prepare the Lord's way into the soul. Some fill their hands with business, to put their convictions out of their heads, as Cain, who fell a building of a city: Some put them off with delays and fair promises, as Felix did: Some will sport them away in company, and some sleep them away. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of sanctification; whose work it is to subdue lusts, and burn up corruptions: How then can the natural man, whose lusts are to him as his limbs, yea, as his life, fail of being an enemy to him?

*Lastly*, Ye are enemies to the law of God. Though the natural man desires to be under the law, as a covenant of works, chusing that way of salvation in opposition to the mystery of Christ; yet as it is a rule of life, requiring universal holiness, and discharging all manner of impurity, he is an enemy to it: "Is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7. For, (1.) There is no unrenewed man, who is not wedded to some one lust

or other, which his heart can by no means part with. Now, that he cannot bring up his inclinations to the holy law, he would fain have the law brought down to his inclinations; a plain evidence of the enmity of the heart against it. And, therefore, *to delight in the law of God, after the inward man*, is proposed in the word as a mark of a gracious soul, Rom. vii. 22. Psal. i. 22. It is from this natural enmity of the heart against the law, that all the Pharisaeical gloss upon it have arisen; whereby the commandment, which is in itself exceeding broad, has been made narrow, to the intent it might be the more agreeable to the natural disposition of the heart. (2.) The law laid home to the natural conscience, in its spirituality, irritate corruption. The nearer it comes, nature riseth the more against it. In that case, it is as oil to the fire, which, instead of quenching it, makes it flame the more: *When the commandment came, sin revived*, says the Apostle, Rom. vii. 9. What reason can be assigned for this, but the natural enmity of the heart against the holy law? Unmortified corruption, the more it is opposed, the more it rageth. Let us conclude then, that the unregenerate are heart enemies to God, his Son, his Spirit, and his law; that there is a natural contrariety, opposition, and enmity in the will of man, to God himself, and his holy will.

*Fifthly*, There is, in the will of man, contumacy against the Lord. Man's will is naturally wilful in an evil course. He will have his will, though it should ruin him; it is with him, as with the leviathan, Job xli. 29. "Darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of a spear." The Lord calls to him by his word, says to him, as Paul to the jailor, when he was about to kill himself, *Do thyself no harm*. Sinners, "Why will ye die?" Ezek. xviii. 31. But they will not hearken: "Every one turneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle," Jer. viii. 6. We have a promise of life in form of a command, Prov. iv. 4. "Keep my commandments and live." It speaketh impenitent sinners to be self-destroyers, wilful self-murderers. They transgress the command of living; as if one servant should wilfully starve himself to death, or greedily drink up a cup of poison, which his master commands him to forbear; even so do they; they will not live, they will die, Prov. viii. 36. "All they that hate me love death."

© what a heart is this ! It is a stony heart, (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) hard and inflexible, as a stone : Mercies melt it not, judgment break it not ; yet it will break ere it bow. It is an insensible heart ; though there be upon the sinner a weight of sin, which makes the earth to stagger ; although there is a weight of wrath on him, which makes the devils to tremble ; yet he goes lightly under the burden ; he feels not the weight more than a stone ; till the Spirit of the Lord quicken him) so far as to feel it.

*Lastly,* The unrenewed will is wholly perverse in reference to man's chief and highest end. The natural man's chief end is not his God, but his self. Man is a mere relative, dependent, borrowed being ; he has no being nor goodness originally from himself ; but all he hath is from God, as the first cause and spring of all perfection, natural or moral : Dependence is woven into his very nature ; so that if God should totally withdraw from him, he would dwindle into a mere nothing. Seeing then whatever man is, he is of him ; surely in whatever he is, he should be to him ; as the waters which come from the sea do, of course, return thither again. And thus man was created, directly looking to God, as his chief end ; but falling into sin, he fell off from God, and turned into himself ; and like a traitor usurping the throne, he gathers in the rents of the crown to himself : Now, this infers a total apostacy, and universal corruption in man ; for where the chief and last end is changed, there can be no goodness there. This is the case of all men in their natural state, Psal. xiv. 2, 3. "The Lord looked down,—to see if there were any that did—seek God. They are all gone aside," viz. from God ; they seek not God, but themselves. And though many fair shrewds of morality are to be found amongst them, yet there is none that doeth good, no not one : for though some of them run well, they are still off the way ; they never aim at the right mark. They are lovers of their own-selves (2 Tim. iii. 2.) more than God, verse 4. Wherefore Jesus Christ, having come into the world, to bring men back to God again, came to bring them out of themselves, in the first place, Matth. xvi. 25. The godly groan under the remains of this woful disposition of the heart ; they acknowledge it, and set themselves against it, in its subtle and dangerous insinuations. The unregenerate, though

when sin sleeps soundly in their own breasts. Even good David, when he was at his worst, was most violent against the faults of others. While his conscience was asleep under his guilt, in the matter of Uriah; the Spirit of the Lord takes notice, that his *anger was greatly kindled against the man*, in the parable, 2 Sam. xii. 5. And on these grounds it is thought, it was at the same time that he ordered the Ammonites so cruelly, as is related, ver. 31. "Cutting them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and making them pass through the kiln." Grace makes men zealous against sin in others as well as in themselves; but eyes turned inward to the corruption of nature, clothe them with pity and compassion and fill them with thankfulness to the Lord, that they themselves were not the persons left to be such spectacles to man frailty. (3.) There are not a few, who, if they are kept from affliction in worldly things, and from gross breakings in their conversation, know not what it is to have a sad heart. If they meet with a cross, which their hearts cannot stoop to bear, they will be ready to say it to be gone; but the corruption of their nature never lets them long for heaven. Lusts scandalously breaking in a time will mar their peace; but the sin of their nature ever makes them a heavy heart. (4.) Delaying of repentance, in hopes to set about it afterwards. Many have their own appointed time for repentance and reformation, but they were such complete masters over their lusts, that they can allow them to gather more strength, and yet overcome them. They take up resolutions to amend, without coming to Jesus Christ, union with him, and strength from him, plain evidence that they are strangers to themselves, so they are left to themselves, and their flourishing relations wither; for as they see not the necessity, so they see not the benefit of the dew from heaven to water them. Mens venturing frankly on temptations, and promising liberally on their own heads. They cast themselves fearlessly into temptation, in confidence of coming off fairly, were they sensible of the corruption of their nature, would beware of entering on the devil's ground: A girt about with bags of gun-powder, would be loth to go where sparks of fire are flying, lest he should be blown away. Self-jealousing well becomes Christians: *Lord, is it*

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ing in it, assure yourselves you have forgot the best part of the errand a poor sinner has to the Physician of souls. What would it have availed the people of Jericho, to have set before Elisha all the vessels in their city full of the water that was naught, if they had not led him forth to the spring, to cast in the salt there? 2 Kings ii. 19, 20, 21. The application is easy. (2.) Have a special eye towards it in your repentance, whether initial or progressive, in your first repentance, and in the renewing of your repentance, afterwards. Though a man be sick, there is no fear of death, if the sickness strike not his heart; and there is as little fear of the death of sin, as long as the sin of our nature is not touched. But if ye would repent indeed, let the streams lead you up to the fountain; and mourn over your corrupt nature, as the cause of all sin, in heart, life, and life, Psalm li. 4, 5. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.—Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (3.) Have a special eye upon it in your mortification, Gal. v. 24. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." It is the root of bitterness that must be struck at, which the axe of mortification must be laid to; else we labour in vain. In vain do men go about to purge the streams, while they are at no pains about the muddy fountain: It is vain religion to attempt to make the life truly good, while the corruption of nature retains its ancient vigour, and the power of it is not broken. *Lastly*, Ye are to eye it in your daily walk. He that would walk aright, must have one eye upwards to Jesus Christ, and another inward to the corruption of his own nature. It is not enough that we look about us, we must also look within us. There the wall is weakest; there our greatest enemy lies; and there are grounds for daily watching and mourning.

III. I shall offer some reasons, why we should especially notice the sin of our nature.

1. Because of all sins it is the most extensive and destructive. It goes through the whole man, and spoils all. Other sins mar particular parts of the image of God; but this doth at once deface the whole. A disease affecting any particular member of the body is ill; but that which affects the whole is worse. The corruption of nature is

the poison of the old serpent, cast into the fountain of action; and so infects every action, every breathing of the soul.

2. It is the cause of all particular lusts, and actual sins, in our hearts and lives. It is the spawn which the great Leviathan has left in the souls of men; from whence comes all the fry of actual sins and abominations. Mark vii. 21. "Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries," &c. It is the bitter fountain; particular lusts are but rivulets running from it, which bring forth into the life, a part only, and not the whole of what is within. Now the fountain is still above the streams; so where the water is good, it is best in the fountain; where it is ill, it is worst there. The corruption of nature being that which defiles all, itself must needs be the abominable thing.

3. It is virtually all sin; for it is the seed of all sins, which want but the occasion to set up their heads; being in the corruption of nature, as the effect in the virtue of its cause. Hence it is called a *body of death*, Rom. vii. 24. as consisting of the several members, belonging to such a *body of sins*, Col. ii. 11. whose life lies in spiritual death. It is the cursed ground, fit to bring forth all manner of noxious weeds. As the whole nest of venomous creatures must needs be more dreadful than any few of them that come creeping forth; so the sin of thy nature, that mother of abominations, must be worse than any particular lusts, that appear stirring in thy heart and life. Never did every sin appear in the conversation of the vilest wretch that ever lived; but look thou into thy corrupt nature, and there thou mayest see all, and every sin in the seed and root thereof. There is a fulness of all unrighteousness there, Rom. i. 29. There is atheism, idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, and whatsoever is vile. Possibly none of these appear to thee in thy heart; but there is more in that unfathomable depth of wickedness than thou knowest. Thy corrupt heart is like an ant's nest, on which, while the stone lieth, none of them appear; but take off the stone, stir them up but with the point of a straw, you will see what a swarm is there, and how lively they be. Just such a sight would thy heart afford thee, did the Lord but withdraw the restraint he has upon it, and suffer Satan to stir it up by temptation.



• 4. The sin of our nature is, of all sins, the most fix and abiding. Sinful actions, though the guilt and stain them may remain, yet in themselves they are passing. The drunkard is not always at his cup, nor the unclean person always acting lewdness. But the corruption of nature is an abiding sin; it remains with men in its full power night and by day, at all times, fixed as with bands of iron and brass; till their nature be changed by converting grace; and the remains of it continue with the godly, unto the death of the body. Pride, envy, covetousness, and the like, are not always stirring in thee. But the proud, envious, carnal nature, is still with thee; even as the clothe that is wrong is not always striking wrong; but the wrong set continues with it, without great intermission.

5. It is the great reigning sin, Rom. vi. 12. "Let sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof." There are three things you may observe in the corrupt heart. (1.) There is the corrupt nature; the corrupt set of the heart, whereby men are unapt for all good, and fitted for all evil. This the Apostle here calls, sin which reigns. (2.) There are particular lusts, or dispositions of that corrupt nature, which the Apostle calls the lusts thereof; such as pride, covetousness, &c. (3.) There is one among these, which is (like Saul amongst the people) higher by far than the rest, namely, *sin which doth so easily beset us*, Heb. xii. 1. This we usually call the predominant sin, because it doth, as it were, reign over other particular lusts; so that other lusts may yield to it. These three are like a river which divides itself into many streams, whereof one is greater than the rest. The corruption of nature is the river-head, which has many particular lusts, in which it runs; but it mainly disburdens itself into what is commonly called one's predominant sin. Now, all of these being fed by the sin of our nature, it is evident that sin is the great reigning sin which never loseth its superiority over particular lusts, that live and grow with it, and by it. But as in some rivers, the main stream runs not always in one and the same channel; so particular predominants may be changed, as lust in youth may be succeeded by covetousness in old age. Now, what doth avail to reform in other sins, while the great reigning sin remains in its full power? What though some partici

just be broken? If that sin, the sin of our nature, keep the throne, it will set up another in its stead; as when a water course is stopped in one place, while the fountain is not dammed up, it will stream forth another way. And thus some cast off their prodigality, but covetousness comes up in its stead; some cast away their profanity, and the corruption of nature sends not its main stream that way as before; but it runs in another channel, namely, in that of a legal disposition, self-righteousness, or the like, so that people are ruined by their not eyeing the sin of their nature.

*Lastly*, It is an hereditary evil, Psal. li. 5. "In sin did my mother conceive me." Particular lusts are not so, but in the virtue of their cause. A prodigal father may have a frugal son; but this disease is necessarily propagated in nature, and therefore hardest to cure. Surely then the word should be given out against this sin, as against the King of Israel, 1 Kings xxii. 31. Fight neither with small nor great, save only with this; for this sin being broke, all other sins are broken with it; and while it stands entire, there is no victory.

IV. That ye may get a view of the corruption of your nature, I would recommend to you three things. (1.) Study to know the spirituality and extent of the law of God, for that is the glass wherein you may see yourselves. (2.) Observe your hearts all times, but especially under temptation. Temptation is a fire that brings up the scum of the vile heart: Do you carefully mark the first risings of corruption. *Lastly*, Go to God through Jesus Christ, for illumination by his Spirit. Lay out your soul before the Lord, as willing to know the vileness of your nature; say unto him, *That which I know not, teach thou me*, and be willing to take in light from the word. Believe, and you shall see. It is by the word the Spirit teacheth, but without the Spirit's teaching, all other teaching will be to little purpose. Though the gospel should shine about you, like the sun at noon-day, and this great truth be never so plainly preached; you will never see yourselves aright, until the Spirit of the Lord light his candle within your breast: The fulness and glory of Christ, the corruption and vileness of our nature, are never rightly learned, but where the Spirit of Christ is the teacher.

man is a child of wrath, a son of death. He is a malefactor dead in law, lying in chains of guilt; a criminal held fast in his fetters, till the day of execution; which will not fail, unless a pardon be obtained from his God, who is his judge and party too. By that means, indeed, children of wrath may become children of the kingdom. The phrase in the text, however common it is in holy language, is very significant. And as it is evident, that the Apostle calling natural men the children of disobedience, ver. 2. means more than that they were disobedient children; for such may the Lord's own children be: So to be children of wrath is more than simply to be liable to, or under wrath. Jesus Christ was liable to, and under wrath; but I doubt we have any warrant to say, he was a child of wrath. The phrase seems to intimate, that men are, whatsoever they are in their natural state, under the wrath of God; that they are wholly under wrath; wrath is, as it were, woven into their very nature, and mixeth itself with the whole of the man; who is (if I may so speak) a very lump of wrath, a child of hell, as the iron in the fire is all fire. For men naturally are children of wrath, come forth (so to speak) out of the womb of wrath; Jonah's gourd was the son of a night, which we render came up in a night, Jonah iv. 10. as if it had come out of the womb of the night, (as we read of the womb of the morning, Psal. cx. 3.) and so the birth following the belly whence it came was soon gone. The sparks of fire are called sons of the burning coal, Job v. 7. marg. Isa. xxi. 10. "O my threshing, and the corn (or son) of my floor," threshed in the floor of wrath, and, as it were, brought forth by it. Thus the natural man is a child of wrath; "It comes into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones," Psal. cix. 18. For though Judas was the only son of perdition amongst the Apostles, yet all men, by nature, are of the same family.

2. There is the rise of this misery; men have it by nature. They owe it to their nature, not to their substance or offence; for that neither is nor was sin; and, therefore, cannot make them children of wrath, though for sin it may be under wrath; not to their nature as qualified, at man's creation, by his Maker, but to their nature, as vitiated and corrupted by the fall. To the vicious quality, or corruption of their nature, (whereof before)

their principle of action, and ceasing from action, principle is an unregenerate state. Now by this we are children of wrath ; as in time of pestilence, one draws in death together with the disease ; Wherefore seeing from our first being as Adam, we are corrupt children, shaped in conceived in sin ; we are also, from that moment, wrath.

universality of this misery. All are by nature wrath ; *We*, saith the Apostle, *even as others* : all as Gentiles. Those that are now by grace of God, were by nature in no better case than are still in their natural state.

There is a glorious and happy change intimated in children of wrath, but are not so now ; grace takes us out of that fearful state. This the Apostle says of himself and other believers. And thus, it well becomes people of God to be often standing on the shore, looking to the red sea of the state of wrath, they were weltering in, even as others.

*Man's natural State a State of Wrath.*

NE, *The state of nature is a state of wrath.* in a natural unregenerate state is in a state of wrath. We are born children of wrath ; and continue so, we are born again. Nay, as soon as we were children we were children of wrath.

Insist on what I am to say on this point, with a view touching the universality of this state of wrath, which may serve to prepare the way of the word on consciences.

It has gone as wide as ever sin went. When God said, the wrath of God brake in upon them as a flood, God spared not the angels which sinned, but cast them down to hell," 2 Pet. ii. 4. And thereby it was testified, that no natural excellency in the creature could deliver it from the wrath of God ; if once it becomes a creature. The finest and the nicest piece of the temple of heaven, if once the Creator's image upon it be defaced by sin, God can and will dash to pieces, in ; unless satisfaction be made to justice, and that repaired ; neither of which the sinner himself

can do. Adam sinned; and the whole lump of mankind was leavened, and bound over to the fiery oven of God's wrath. And from the text ye may learn, (1.) That ignorance of that state cannot free men from it; the Gentiles, that knew not God, *were by nature children of wrath, even as others.* A man's house may be on fire, his wife and children perishing in the flames; while he knows nothing of it, and therefore is not concerned about it. Such is your case, O ye that are ignorant of these things! wrath is silently sinking into your souls, while you are blessing yourselves, saying, *Ye shall have peace.* Ye need not a more certain token, that ye are *children of wrath*, than that ye never yet saw yourselves such. Ye cannot be the children of God, that never yet saw yourselves children of the devil. Ye cannot be in the way to heaven, that never saw yourselves by nature in the road to hell. Ye are grossly ignorant of your state by nature; and so ignorant of God, and of Christ, and your need of him: And though ye look on your ignorance as a covert from wrath; yet take it out of the mouth of God himself, that it will ruin ye if it be not removed, Isa. xxvii. 11. "It is a people of no understanding; therefore, he that made them will not have mercy on them." See 2 Thess. i. 8. Hos. iv. 6. (2.) No outward privileges can exempt men from this state of wrath; for the Jews, the children of the kingdom, God's peculiar people, were children of wrath, even as others. Though ye be church-members, partakers of all church-privileges; though ye be descended of godly parents, of great and honourable families; be what ye will, ye are by nature heirs of hell, children of wrath. (3.) No profession, nor attainments in a profession of religion, do or can exempt a man from this state of wrath. Paul was one of the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, Acts xxvi. 5. yet a child of wrath, even as others, till he was converted. The close hypocrite, and the profane, are alike as to their state, however different their conversations be; and they will be alike in their fatal end, Psal. cxxv. 5. "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." (4.) Young ones that are yet but setting out into the world have not that to do, to make themselves children of wrath, by following the graceless multitude. They are children of wrath by

; so it is done already ; they were born heirs of they will indeed make themselves more so, if they , while they are young, flee from that wrath they orn to, by fleeing to Jesus Christ. *Lastly*, What- en are now by grace, they were even as others, by . And this may be a sad meditation to them that een at ease from their youth, and have had no s.

r, these things being premised, I shall, in the first shew what this state of wrath is ; next, confirm the e ; and then apply it.

am to shew what this state of wrath is. But who ly describe the wrath of an angry God ? None can

Yet so much of it must be discovered, as may o convince men of the absolute necessity of fleeing s Christ, out of that state of wrath. Anger in men ssion, and commotion of the spirit for an injury re- , with a desire to resent the same. When it comes ight, and is fixed in one's spirit, it is called wrath. here are no passions in God, properly speaking ; e inconsistent with his absolute unchangeableness, lependency ; and, therefore, Paul and Barnabas (to e the mistake of the Lycaonians, who thought they ods) tell them, they were men of like passions with elves, Acts xiv. 15. Wrath then is attributed to ot in respect of the affection of wrath, but the thereof. Wrath is a fire in the bowels of a man, sting the man himself ; but there is no perturbation

. His wrath does not in the least mar that infinite and happiness, which he hath in himself. It is a ure undisturbed act of his will, producing dreadful against the sinner. It is little we know of an in- fod ; but condescending to our weakness, he is l to speak of himself to us, after the manner of men. therefore notice man's wrath, but remove every n our consideration of the wrath of God, that argues ection ; and so we may attain to some view of it, er scanty. By this means we are led to take up the of God against the natural man in these three :

t, There is wrath in the heart of God against him- ord approves him not, but is displeased with him. natural man lies under the displeasure of God ;

and that is heavier than mountains of brass. Altho he be pleased with himself, and others be pleased him too ; yet God looks down on him, as displeased. *First*, His person is under God's displeasure ; *Thou all workers of iniquity*, Psal. v. 5. A godly man's displeasing to God, yet his person is still *accepted beloved*, Eph. i. 6. But " God is angry with the wicked every day," Psal. vii. 11. A fire of wrath burneth continually against him in the heart of God. They are as dogs and swine, most abominable creatures in the sight of God. Though their natural state be gilded over with a profession, yet they are abhorred of God ; they are as *smoke in his nose*, Isa. lxv. 5. and *lukewarm water spewed out of his mouth*, Rev. iii. 16. *whited sepulchre*, Matt. xxiii. 27. *a generation of vipers*, Matt. xii. 34. *a people of his wrath*, Isa. x. 6.—*Secondly*, He is displeased with all they do : It is impossible for them to please being unbelievers, Heb. xi. 6. He hates their persons and so hath no pleasure in, but is displeased with their best works, Isa. lvi. 3. " He that sacrificeth a lamb he cut off a dog's neck," &c. Their duty, as due to him, is *an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. xv. 8. When men turn their back upon them whom they are bound to love ; so the Lord's refusing communion with the wicked man in his duties, is a plain indication of this wrath.

*Secondly*, There is wrath in the word of God against him. When wrath is in the heart, it seeks a vent in words, so God fights against the natural man with *the word of his mouth*, Rev. ii. 16. The Lord's word never doeth good of him, but always curseth or condemneth him. Hence it is, that when he is awakened, the word of God preached often increaseth his horror. *First*, It condemneth all his actions, together with his corrupt nature. He is nothing he does, but the law declares it to be sinful. It is a rule of perfect obedience, from which he always declines ; and so it rejects every thing he doeth as sin. *Secondly*, It pronounceth his doom, and doeth God's curse against him, Gal. iii. 10. " As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them." Be he never so well in the world,

nounceth a woe from heaven against him, Isa. iii. 11. The Bible is a quiver filled with arrows of wrath against him, ready to be poured in on his soul. God's threatenings in his word hang over his head as a black cloud, ready to shower down on him every moment. The word is indeed the saint's security against wrath, but it binds the natural man's sin and wrath together, as a certain pledge of his ruin, if he continue in that state. So the conscience being awakened, and perceiving this tie made by the law, the man is filled with terrors in his soul.

*Thirdly*, There is wrath in the hand of God against the natural man. He is under heavy strokes of wrath already, and is liable to more.

*1st*, There is wrath on his body. It is a piece of cursed clay, which wrath is sinking into by virtue of the threatening of the first covenant, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." There is never a disease, gripe, nor stitch, that affects him, but it comes on him with the sting of God's indignation in it. They are all cords of death, sent before to bind the prisoner.

*2dly*, There is wrath upon his soul. (1.) He can have no communion with God; he is *foolish and shall not stand in God's sight*, Psal. v. 5. When Adam sinned, God turned him out of paradise; and natural men are, as Adam left them, banished from the gracious presence of the Lord; and can have no access to him in that state. There is war betwixt heaven and them; and so all commerce is cut off. "They are without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. The sun is gone down on them, and there is not the least glimpse of favour towards them from heaven. (2.) Hence the soul is left to pine away in its iniquity. The natural darkness of their minds, the averseness to good in their wills, the disorder of their affections, and distemper of their consciences, and all their natural plagues, are left upon them in a penal way; and being so left, increase daily. God casts a portion of worldly goods to them, more or less, as a bone is thrown to a dog; but alas! his wrath against them appears, in that they get no grace. The Physician of souls comes by them, and goes by them, and cures others beside them; while they are consuming away in their iniquity, and



ripening daily for utter destruction. (3.) They lie open to fearful additional plagues on their souls, even in this life. *First*, Sometimes they meet with deadening strokes, silent blows from the hand of an angry God; arrows of wrath that enter into their souls without noise; Isa. vi. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes." God strives with them for a while, and convictions enter their consciences; but they rebel against the light and by a secret judgment, they are knocked on the head so that, from that time, they do, as it were, live and act above ground. Their hearts are deadened; their affections withered; their consciences stupified; and the whole souls blasted; "cast forth as a branch and withered," John xv. 16. They are plagued with judicial blindness. They shut their eyes against the light, and they are given over to the devil, the god of this world, to be blinded more, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Yea, "God sends the strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," 2 Thess. ii. 11. even conscience, like a false light on the shore leads them upon rocks; by which they are broken in pieces. They harden themselves against God; and he gives up with them, and leaves them to Satan and their own hearts, whereby they are hardened more and more. They are often given up unto vile affections, Rom. i. 2. The reins are laid on their necks; and they are left to run into all excess, as their furious lusts draw them. *Secondly*, Sometimes they meet with quickening strokes whereby their souls become like mount Sinai; where nothing is seen but fire and smoke; nothing heard but the thunder of God's wrath, and the voice of the trumpet of a broken law, waxing louder and louder; which makes them like Pashur, (Jer. xx. 4.) *A terror to themselves*. God takes the filthy garments of their sins, which they were wont to sleep in securely; overlays them with bright stone, and sets them on fire about their ears; so that they have a hell within them.

*Sdly*, There is wrath on the natural man's enjoyment. Whatever be wanting in his house, there is one thing that is never wanting there, Prov. iii. 33. "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." Wrath is on all that he has; on the bread that he eats, the liquor he drinks, and

which he wears, "His basket and store are cursed," xxviii. 17. Some things fall wrong with him; and comes to pass by virtue of his wrath; other things going to his wish, and there is wrath in that too; for snare to his soul, Prov. i. 32. "The prosperity of hall destroy them." This wrath turns his blessings curses, Mal. ii. 2. "I will curse your blessings; yea, I cursed them already." The holy law is a killing to him, 2 Cor. iii. 6. The ministry of the gospel *cur of death unto death*, chap. ii. 15. In the sacrament of the Lord's supper, "He eateth and drinketh dam- to himself," 1 Cor. xi. 29. Nay, more than all Christ himself is to him *a stone of stumbling, and a f offence*, 1 Pet. ii. 8. Thus wrath follows the natu- m, as his shadow doth his body.

y, He is under the power of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. evil has overcome him, so he is his by conquest; his captive, Isa. xlix. 24. The natural man is con- d already, John iii. 18. and, therefore, under the hand of him that hath the power of death, that is, vil. And he keeps his prisoner, in the prison of a l state, bound hand and foot, Isa. lxi. 1. laden with lusts, as chains wherewith he holds him fast. Thou not, as many do, call on the devil to take thee; for a fast hold of thee already, as a child of wrath.

tly, The natural man has no security for a moment's from the wrath of God, its coming on him to the lost. The curse of the law denounced against him, ready tied him to the stake; so that the arrows of : may pierce his soul; and in him may meet all the es and plagues that flow from the avenging wrath of See how he is set as a mark to the arrows of wrath, vii. 11, 12, 13. "God is angry with the wicked day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword: He ent his bow, and made it ready; he hath also pre- for him the instruments of death." Doth he lie down p? There is not a promise, he knows of, or can to secure him that he shall not be in hell ere he . Justice is pursuing, and cries for vengeance on mer; the law casts the fire-balls of its curses con- ly upon him; wasted and long-tired patience is that keeps in his life; he walks amidst enemies armed

against him ; his name may be *Magor Missabib*, i. e. *round about*, Jer. xx. 3. Angels, devils, men, b stones, heaven, and earth, are in readiness, on a w command from the Lord, to ruin him.

Thus the natural man lives, but he must die too death is a dreadful messenger to him. It comes him armed with wrath, and puts three sad charges hand. (1.) Death chargeth him to bid an eternal wel to all things in this world ; to leave it, and mak to another world. Ah ! what a dreadful charge this be to a child of wrath ! He can have no comfort heaven, for God is his enemy ; and as for the thin the world, and the enjoyment of his lusts, which the only springs of his comfort ; these are in a m dried up to him for ever. He is not ready for a world ; he was not thinking of removing so soon ; he was, yet he has no portion secured to him in a world, but that which he was born to, and was incre all his days, namely, a treasure of wrath. But go he his clay-god, the world, must be parted with, and has he more ? There was never a glimmering of lig favour from heaven, to his soul ; and now the wrat did hang in the threatening, as a cloud like a man's is darkening the face of the whole heaven above and if he "look unto the earth," (from whence light was wont to come,) "behold trouble and dar dimness of anguish ; and he shall be driven to dark Isa. viii. 22. (2.) Death chargeth soul and body t till the great day. His soul is required of him, Lu 20. O what a miserable parting must this be to a of wrath ! Care was indeed taken to provide for the things necessary for this life ; but, alas ! there is no laid up for another life to it ; nothing to be a s glorious resurrection : As it lived, so it must die, a again sinful flesh ; fuel for the fire of God's wrat for the soul, he was never solicitous to provide for lay in the body, dead to God, and all things truly and so must be carried out into the pit, in the clothes of its natural state ; for now that death c companions in sin must part. (3.) Death charge soul to compear before the tribunal of God, while th lies to be carried to the grave, Ecclea. xii. 7.

spirit shall return unto God who gave it," Heb. ix. 2, 7. "It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after this the judgment." Well were it for the sinful soul, if it might be buried together with the body. But that cannot be; it must go and receive its sentence; and shall be shut up in the prison of hell, while the cursed body lies imprisoned in the grave, till the day of the general judgment.

When the end of the world, appointed of God, is come, the trumpet shall sound, and the dead arise. . Then shall the weary earth, at the command of the Judge, cast forth the bodies; the cursed bodies of those that lived and died in their natural state: "The sea, death, and hell, shall deliver up their dead," Rev. xx. 13. Their miserable bodies and souls shall be re-united, and they sisted before the tribunal of Christ. Then shall they receive that fearful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matth. xxv. 41. Whereupon "they shall go away into everlasting punishment," ver. 46. They shall be eternally shut up in hell, never to get the least drop of comfort, nor the least ease of their torment. There they shall be punished with the punishment of loss; being excommunicated from the presence of God, his angels and saints. All means of grace, all hopes of a delivery, shall be for ever cut off from their eyes. They shall not have *a drop of water to cool their tongues*, Luke xvi. 24, 25. They shall be punished with the punishment of sense. They must not only depart from God, but depart into fire, into everlasting fire. There the worm, that shall gnaw them, shall never die; the fire, that shall scorch them, shall never be quenched. God shall, through all eternity, hold them up with the one hand, and pour the full vials of wrath into them with the other.

This is that state of wrath natural men live in; being under much of the wrath of God, and liable to more. But for a further view of it, let us consider the qualities of that wrath. (1.) It is irresistible; there is no standing before it: "Who may stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry?" Psal. lxxxvi. 7. Can the worm, or the moth, defend itself against him that designs to crush it? As little can worm man stand before an angry God. Foolish

man indeed practically bids a defiance to heaven ; but the Lord often, even in this world, opens such sluices of wrath on them, as all their might cannot stop ; they are carried away thereby, as with a flood. How much more will it be so in hell ? (2.) It is insupportable. What one cannot resist, he will set himself to bear ; but, " Who shall dwell with devouring fire ? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings ? " God's wrath is a weight that will sink men into the lowest hell. It is a burden no man is able to stand under. " A wounded spirit who can bear it ? " Prov. xviii. 14. (3.) It is unavoidable to such as go on impenitently in their sinful course. " He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy, " Prov. xxix. 1. We may now fly from it indeed, by flying to Jesus Christ ; but such as fly from Christ shall never be able to avoid it. Whither can men fly from an avenging God ? Where will they find a shelter ? The hills will not hear them ; the mountains will be deaf to their loudest cries ; when they cry to them, to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. (4.) It is powerful and fierce wrath, Psalm xc. 11. " Who knoweth the power of thine anger ? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. " We are apt to fear the wrath of man more than we ought ; but no man can apprehend the wrath of God to be more dreadful than it really is : The power of it can never be known to the utmost ; seeing it is infinite, and (properly speaking) has no utmost ; how fierce soever it be, either on earth or in hell, God can still carry it further. Every thing in God is most perfect in its kind ; and, therefore, no wrath is so fierce as his. O sinner, how wilt thou be able to endure that wrath, which will tear thee in pieces, Psal. l. 22. and grind thee to powder, Luke xx. 18. The history of the two she-bears, that tore the children of Bethel, is an awful one, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. But the united force of the rage of lions, leopards, and she-bears, bereaved of their whelps, is not sufficient to give us even a scanty view of the power of the wrath of God, Hos. xiii 7, 8. " Therefore I will be unto them as a lion ; as a leopard by the way will I observe them. I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rent the call of their heart, " &c. (5.) It is penetrating and piercing wrath. It is burning

wrath, and fiery indignation. There is no pain more exquisite than that which is caused by fire ; and no fire so piercing as the fire of God's indignation, that burns into the lowest hell, Deut. xxxii. 22. The arrows of mens wrath can pierce flesh, blood, and bones, but cannot reach the soul ; but the wrath of God will sink into the soul, and so pierce a man in the most tender part. Like as, when a person is thunder-struck, oft-times there is not a wound to be seen in the skin ; yet life is gone, and the bones are, as it were, melted ; so God's wrath can penetrate into, and melt one's soul within him, when his earthly comforts stand about him entire, and untouched, as in Belshazzar's case, Dan. v. 6. (6.) It is constant wrath, running parallel with the man's continuance in an unregenerate state ; constantly attending him, from the womb to the grave. There are few so dark days, but the sun sometimes looketh out from under the clouds ; but the wrath of God is an abiding cloud on the subjects of it, John iii. 36. The wrath of God abideth on him that believes not. (7.) It is eternal. O miserable soul ! If thou fly not from this wrath unto Jesus Christ, thy misery had a beginning, but it shall never have an end. Should devouring death wholly swallow thee up, and for ever hold thee fast in a grave, it would be kind ; but thou must live again, and never die ; that thou mayst be ever dying, in the hands of the living God. Cold death will quench the flame of man's wrath against us, if nothing else do it ; but God's wrath, when it has come on the sinner, millions of ages will still be the wrath to come, Mat. iii. 7. 1 Thess. i. 10. As the water of a river is still coming, how much soever of it has passed. While God is, he will pursue the quarrel. *Lastly*, Howsoever dreadful it is, and though it be eternal, yet it is most just wrath ; it is a clear fire, without the least smoke of injustice. The sea of wrath raging with greatest fury against the sinner is clear as chrysal. The Judge of all the earth can do no wrong. He knows no transports of passion, for they are inconsistent with the perfection of his nature. " Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance ? (I speak as a man,) God forbid ; for then, how shall God judge the world ? " Rom. iii. 5, 6.

*The Doctrine of the State of Wrath confirmed and vindicated.*

II. I shall confirm the doctrine. Consider, (1.) How peremptory the threatening of the first covenant is; "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17. Hereby sin and punishment being connected, the veracity of God ascertains the execution of the threatening. Now all men being by nature under this covenant, the breach of it lays them under the curse. (2.) The justice of God requires that a child of sin be a child of wrath; that the law being broken, the sanction thereof should take place. God, as man's Ruler and Judge, cannot but do right, Gen. xviii. 25. Now it is a righteous thing with God to recompense sin with wrath, 2 Thess. i. 6. *He is of purer eyes, than to behold evil*, Hab. i. 13. *And he hates all the workers of iniquity*, Psal. v. 6. (3.) The horrors of a natural conscience prove this. There is a conscience in the breasts of men, which tell them they are sinners, and therefore liable to the wrath of God. Let men, at any time, soberly commune with themselves, and they will find they have the witness in themselves, "knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. (4.) The pangs of the new birth, the work of the spirit of bondage on elect souls in order to their conversion, demonstrate this. Hereby their natural sinfulness and misery, as liable to the wrath of God, are plainly taught them; filling their hearts with fear of that wrath. Now that this spirit of bondage is no other than the Spirit of God, whose work is to convince of sin, righteousness, and judgment, (John xvi. 8.) this testimony must needs be true; for the Spirit of truth cannot witness an untruth. Meanwhile, true believers being freed from the state of wrath, "receive not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but receive the Spirit of adoption," Rom. iii. 15. And, therefore, if fears of that nature do arise, after the soul's union with Christ, they come from the saint's own spirit, or from a worse. *Lastly*, The sufferings of Christ plainly prove this doctrine. Wherefore was the Son of God, a Son under wrath, but because the children of men were children of wrath? He suffered the wrath of God, not for himself, but for those

our of God, will be apt to rise up against his Judge, his own heart condemn his procedure. Nevertheless the Judge being infinitely just, the sentence must be us. And, therefore, to stop thy mouth, O proud and to still thy clamour against the righteous Judge, *First*, Thou art a sinner by nature, and it is reasonable that guilt and wrath be as old as sin. Would not God begin to vindicate his honour, as vile worms begin to impair it? Why shall not a dog bite the thief, as soon as he leaps over the hedge? Would not the threatening take hold of the sinner, as he casts away the command? The poisonous serpent affords a man sufficient ground to kill it, as ever he can reach it; and, by this time thou be convinced, that thy nature is a very compound of against God. *Secondly*, Thou hast not only an enmity to God in thy nature, but hast discovered it by actions, which are in his eye acts of hostility. Thou brought forth thy lust into the field of battle against the sovereign Lord. And now, that thou art such a criminal, thy condemnation is just; for besides the sin of thy nature, thou hast done that against heaven, which if thou didst not do against men, thy life behoved to have gone for it. Shall not wrath from heaven overtake thee? (1.) Thou art guilty of high treason, and rebellion against the



stopped thine ears at their voice, and sent them away mourning for thy pride. Thou hast conspired with his grand enemy the devil. Although thou art a sworn servant of the King of glory, daily receiving of his favours, and living on his bounty; thou art holding a correspondence, and hast contracted a friendship with his greatest enemy, and art acting for him against thy Lord; for, *The lust of the devil ye will do*, John viii. 44. (2.) Thou art a murderer before the Lord. Thou hast laid the stumbling-block of thine iniquity before the blind world; and hast ruined the souls of others by thy sinful course. And though thou dost not see now, the time may come, when thou shalt see the blood of thy relations, neighbours, acquaintances, and others, upon thy head, Matth. xviii. 7. "Wo unto the world because of offences.—Wo to that man by whom the offence cometh. Yea, thou art a self-murderer before God," Prov. viii. 36. "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death," Ezek. xviii. 31. *Why will ye die?* The laws of men go as far as they can against the self-murderer, denying his body a burial-place amongst others, and confiscating his goods; what wonder is it the law of God is so severe against soul murderers? Is it strange, that they who will needs depart from God now, cost what it will, must be forced to depart from him at last, into everlasting fire? But what is yet more criminal, thou art guilty of the murder of the Son of God, for the Lord will reckon these amongst those that pierced him, Rev. i. 7. Thou hast rejected him as well as the Jews did; and by thy rejecting him, thou hast justified their deed. They indeed did not acknowledge him to be the Son of God, but thou dost. What they did against him was in a state of humiliation: but thou hast acted against him in his state of exaltation. These things will aggravate thy condemnation. What wonder, then, if the voice of the Lamb change to the roaring of the lion, against the traitor and murderer.

*Object.* But some will say, Is there not a vast disproportion betwixt our sin and that wrath you talk of? I answer, No; God punishes no more than the sinner deserves. To rectify your mistake, in this matter, consider, (1.) The vast rewards God has annexed to obedience. His

word is no more full of fiery wrath against sin, than it is of gracious rewards to the obedience it requires. If heaven be in the promises, it is altogether equal that hell be in the threatenings. If death were not in the balance with life, eternal misery with eternal happiness, where were the proportion? Moreover, sin deserves the misery, but our best works do not deserve the happiness; yet both are set before us; sin and misery, holiness and happiness. What reason is there then to complain? (2.) How severe soever the threatenings be, yet all has enough ado to reach the end of the law. "Fear him," says our Lord, "which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him," Luke xii. 5. This speaks our dread of divine power and majesty; but how few fear him indeed! The Lord knows the sinners hearts to be exceedingly intent upon fulfilling their lusts; they cleave so fondly to those fulsome breasts, that a small force does not suffice to draw them from them. They that travel through deserts, where they are in hazard from wild beasts, have need to carry fire along with them; and they have need of a hard wedge that have knotty timber to cleave; so a holy law must be fenced with a dreadful wrath, in a world lying in wickedness. But who are they that complain of that wrath as too great, but those to whom it is too little to draw them off from their sinful courses? It was the man who pretended to fear his lord, because he was an austere man, that kept his pound laid up in a napkin; and so he was condemned out of his own mouth, Luke xix. 20, 21, 22. Thou art that man, even thou whose objection I am answering. How can the wrath thou art under, and liable to, be too great, while yet it is not sufficient to awaken thee to fly from it? Is it time to relax the penalties of the law, when men are trampling the commands of it under foot? (3.) Consider how God dealt with his own Son, whom he spared not, Rom. viii. 32. The wrath of God seized on his soul and body both, and brought him into the dust of death. That his sufferings were not eternal, flowed from the quality of the sufferer, who was infinite; and, therefore, able to bear at once the whole load of wrath; and, upon that account, his sufferings were infinite in value. But in value, they must be protracted to an eternity. And what confidence

can a rebel-subject have to quarrel (for his part) a punishment executed on the King's Son? (4.) The sinner doth against God what he can. "Behold thou hast done evil things as thou couldst," Jer. iii. 5. That thou hast not done more and worse, thanks to him who restrained thee; to the chain which the wolf was kept in by, not to thyself. No wonder God shew his power on the sinner, who puts forth his power against God, as far as it will reach. The unregenerate man puts no period to his sinful course; and would put no bounds to it neither, if he were not restrained by divine power for wise ends; and, therefore, it is just he be for ever under wrath. (5.) It is infinite majesty sin strikes against; and so it is, in some sort, an infinite evil. Sin riseth in its demerit, according to the quality of the party offended. If a man wound his neighbour, his goods must go for it; but if he wound his prince, his life must go to make amends for that. The infinity of God makes infinite wrath the just demerit of sin. God is infinitely displeased with sin; and when he acts, he must act like himself, and shew his displeasure by proportionable means. *Lastly*, Those that shall lie for ever under his wrath, will be eternally sinning; and, therefore, must eternally suffer; not only in respect of divine judicial procedure, but because sin is its own punishment, in the same manner that holy obedience is its own reward.

*The Doctrine of the Misery of Man's Natural State applied.*

USE (1.) Of information. Is our state by nature a state of wrath? Then,

1. Surely we are not born innocent. These chains of wrath, which by nature are upon us, speak us to be born criminals. The swaddling bands wherewith infants are bound hand and foot as soon as they are born, may put us in mind of the cords of wrath, with which they are held prisoners, as children of wrath.

2. What desperate madness is it for sinners to go on in their sinful course: What is it but to heap coals of fire on thine own head, and lay more and more fuel to the fire of wrath, to treasure up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath? Rom. ii. 5. Thou mayst perish, when his wrath is kindled but a little, Psalm ii. 12. Why wilt

increase it yet more ? Thou art already bound with cords of death, as will not easily be loosed ; what is there of more ? Stand, careless sinner, and content this.

Thou hast no reason to complain, as long as thou art out of hell. " Wherefore doth a living man complain ? " Lam. iii. 39. If one who has forfeited his life be banished his native country, and exposed to many hardships ; he may well bear all patiently, seeing his life is in danger. Do ye murmur, for that ye are under pain or distress ? Nay, bless God ye are not there, where the punishment never dieth. Dost thou grudge that thou art not in a good condition in the world, as some of thy neighbours are ? Be thankful rather, that ye are not in the case of the damned. Is thy substance gone from thee ? Woe be it that the fire of God's wrath hath not consumed thy substance. Kiss the rod, O sinner, and acknowledge mercy ; God punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve, Job ix. 13.

Here is a memorandum, both for poor and rich. The poorest that go from door to door, and hath nothing left them by their parents, were born to an inheritance. Their first father Adam left them children of the earth ; and continuing in their natural state, they cannot escape it ; " For this is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed to him by God," Job xx. 21. An heritage that will furnish them with an habitation, who have not where to lay their head ; they shall be brought into utter darkness, Mat. xxv. 30. for to them is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever, Jude 13. where reserved shall be sorrow : " They shall lie down in sorrow," Isa. l. 11. their food shall be judgment, for God reserved them with judgment, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. and their drink shall be the red wine of God's wrath, the dregs of all the wicked of the earth shall wring out, and them, Psal. lxxv. 8. I know, that those who are filled with worldly goods, and without the knowledge and grace of God, who therefore may be called the rich, poor, will be apt to say here, We hope God will deliver us from all our misery in this world, and we shall be happy in the next : As if their miserable outward condition in time would secure their happiness in eternity.

thing out of an unclean?" Job xiv. 4. And dost thou think, by sin, to help thyself out of sin and misery? Thy obedience must also be perfect in parts. It must be as broad as the whole law of God; if thou lackest any thing, thou art undone; for the law denounceth the curse on him that continueth not in every thing written in the law. Gal. iii. 10. Thou must give internal and external obedience to the whole law; keep all the commandments of God, heart and life. If thou breakest any one of them, thou shalt incur the curse. A vain thought, or idle word, will shut thee up under the curse. (3.) It must be perfect in respect of degrees, as was the obedience of Adam, when he stood in his innocence. This the law requires, and will accept of no less, Mat. xxii. 37. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." If one degree of that obedience required by the law, be wanting; if each part of that obedience be not screwed up to the greatest height commanded; that want is a breach of the law, and so leaves thee still under the curse. One may bring as many buckets of water, to a house that is on fire, as he is able to carry; yet it may be consumed; and will be so, if he bring not as many as will quench the fire. Even so, although thou shouldst do what thou art able, in keeping the commandments of God, if thou fail in the least degree of obedience which the law enjoins, thou art certainly ruined for ever; unless thou take hold of Christ, renouncing all thy righteousnesses as filthy rags. See Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 10.—*Last* must be perpetual, as the man Christ's obedience, who always did the things that pleased the Father; for the tenor of the law is, "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the law, to do them." Hence, the obedience of Adam was for a while absolutely perfect; because at length he tripped in one point, viz. in eating the forbidden fruit, he fell under the curse of the law. As one should live a dutiful subject to his prince, till the end of his days, and then conspire against him, he may be ruined for his treason. Even so, though thou shouldst, all the time of thy life, live in perfect obedience to the law of God, and only at the hour of death entertain a vain thought, or pronounce an idle word, that idle word, or thought, would blot out all thy former righteousnesses.

uin thee ; namely, in this way, in which thou art seeking to recover thyself.

Now such is the obedience thou must perform, if thou wouldest recover thyself in the way of the law. But though thou shouldst thus obey, the law stakes thee down in the state of wrath, till another demand of it be satisfied, *viz.*

SECONDLY, Thou must pay what thou owest. It is undeniable thou art a sinner ; and, whatever thou mayest be in time to come, justice must be satisfied for thy sin already committed. The honour of the law must be maintained, by thy suffering the denounced wrath. It may be thou hast changed thy course of life, or art now resolved to do so, and set about the keeping of the commands of God ; but, what hast thou done, or what wilt thou do, with the old debt ? Your obedience to God, though it were perfect, is a debt due to him, for the time wherein it is performed ; and can no more satisfy for former sins, than a tenant's paying the current year's rent, can satisfy the master for all bygones. Can the paying of new debts acquit a man from old accounts ? Nay, deceive not yourselves, you will find these laid up in store with God, and sealed up among his treasures, Deut. xxxii. 34. It remains then, that either thou must bear that wrath, to which, for thy sin, thou art liable, according to the law ; or else, thou must acknowledge thou canst not bear it, and thereupon have recourse to the surety, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me now ask thee, Art thou able to satisfy the justice of God ? Canst thou pay thy own debt ? Surely not ; for, seeing he is an infinite God, whom thou hast offended, the punishment, being suited to the quality of the offence, must be infinite. But so it is, thy punishment or sufferings for sin cannot be infinite in value, seeing thou art a finite creature ; therefore, they must be infinite in duration or continuance ; that is, they must be eternal. And so all thy sufferings in this world are but an earnest of what thou must suffer in the world to come.

Now, sinner, if thou canst answer these demands, thou mayest recover thyself in the way of the law. But, art thou not conscious of thy inability to do any of these things, much more to do them all ? Yet, if thou do not all, thou dost nothing. Turn then to what course of life thou wilt,

He must satisfy for their sin, by suffering the punishment due to it; he must do what they cannot do, viz the law perfectly, and so fulfil all righteousness. Amazingly, all this he did; and so became the end of the righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4 now dost thou think God will abate of these terms when his own Son got no abatement of them? Expect not, though thou shouldst beg it with tears of blood if they prevailed, they behoved to prevail against the justice, and honour of God, Gal. iii. 10. 22. "Can every one that continueth not in all things, which are ten in the book of the law, to do them.—And the not of faith, but the man that doth them shall live in it. It is true, that God is merciful; he cannot but be merciful, unless he save you in a way that is inconsistent with his law nor gospel. Hath not his goodness and mercy sufficiently appeared, in sending the Son to do what the law could not do, in that it was through the flesh? He has provided help for them that cannot help themselves; but thou, insensible of thy weakness, wilt needs think to recover thyself by thine own works; while thou art no more able to do it, than move mountains of brass out of their place.

Wherefore, I conclude thou art utterly unable to recover thyself, by the way of works, or of the law, that thou wouldst conclude the same concerning the law.

II. Let us try next, what the sinner can do to recover himself, in the way of the gospel. It is likely thou thinkest, that howbeit thou canst not do all, by thyself alone; yet Jesus Christ offering thee help, thou canst thyself embrace it, and use it to thy recovery. But sinner, be convinced of thine absolute need of the help of Christ, for truly there is help offered, but thou dost not accept of it; there is a rope cast out to haul wrecked sinners to land; but, alas! they have not the skill to catch hold of it. They are like infants exposed in an open field that must starve, though their food be laid out before them, unless one put it into their mouths. To our natural men of this, let it be considered,

*First,* That although Christ is offered in the gospel yet they cannot believe in him. Saving faith is the gift of God's elect; the special gift of God to them, viz

in them by his Spirit. Salvation is offered to them that will believe in Christ; but how can ye believe? John v. 44. It is offered to those that will come to Christ; but no man can come unto him, except the Father draw him. It is offered to them that will look to him, as lifted up on the pole of the gospel, Isa. xlv. 22. but the natural man is spiritually blind, Rev. iii. 17. and as to the things of the Spirit of God, he cannot know them, for they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Nay, whosoever will, he is welcome; let him come, Rev. xxii. 17. But there must be a day of power on the sinner, before the will be willing, Psalm cx. 3.

*Secondly*, Man naturally has nothing wherewithal to improve, to his recovery, the help brought in by the gospel. He is cast away in a state of wrath; but is bound hand and foot, so that he cannot lay hold of the cords of love, thrown out to him in the gospel. The most skilful artificer cannot work without instruments, nor can the most cunning musician play well on an instrument that is out of tune. How can one believe, how can he repent, whose understanding is darkness, Eph. v. 8. whose heart is a stony heart, inflexible, insensible, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. whose affections are wholly disordered and distempered; who is averse to good, and bent to evil? The arms of natural abilities are too short to reach supernatural help; hence those who most excel in them, are oft-times most estranged from spiritual things, Matth. xi. 24. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.

*Thirdly*, Man cannot work a saving change on himself; but so changed he must be, else he can neither believe nor repent, nor ever see heaven. No action can be without a suitable principle. Believing, repenting, and the like, are the product of the new nature; and can never be produced by the old corrupt nature. Now, what can the natural man do in this matter? He must be unregenerate, begotten again into a lively hope; but as the child cannot be active in his own generation, so a man cannot be active, but passive only, in his own regeneration. The heart is shut against Christ; men cannot open it, only God can do it by his grace, Acts xvi. 14. He is dead in sin; he must be quickened, raised out of his grave;



who can do this but God himself? Eph. ii. 1, 3. he must be created in Christ Jesus unto good works ii. 10. These are works of omnipotency, and done by no less power.

*Fourthly*, Man, in his depraved state, is under an inability to do any thing truly good, as was cleared at large; how then can he obey the gospel? His is the very reverse of the gospel; how can he, of self, fall in with that device of salvation, and accept offered remedy? The corruption of man's nature inf concludes his utter inability to recover himself any ner of way; and whoso is convinced of the one, needs admit the other; for they stand and fall tog Were all the purchase of Christ offered to the unrate man, for one good thought; he cannot comm 2 Cor. iii. 5. "Not that we are sufficient of ours to think any thing as of ourselves." Were it offer condition of a good word, yet how can ye, being speak good things? Matth. xii. 35. Nay, were to yourselves, to chuse what is easiest; Christ b tells you, John xv. 5. *Without me, ye can do nothing.*

*Lastly*, The natural man cannot but resist the offering to help him; howbeit that resistance is inf overcome in the elect, by converting grace. C stony heart chuse but to resist the stroke? There only an inability, but an enmity and obstinacy in will by nature. God knows, natural man, (whether knowest it or not,) that thou art obstinate, and thy is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass, Isa. xlviii. cannot be overcome, but by him, who hath broke gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder. Is there such hard work in converting a sinner. times he seems to be caught in the net of the gospe quickly he slips away again. The hook catcheth him; but he struggles, till getting free of it, he away with a bleeding wound. When good hopes ar ceived of him, by those that travail in birth, for the ing of Christ in him; there is oft-times nothing br forth but wind. The deceitful heart makes many to avoid a Saviour, and to cheat the man of his e happiness. Thus the natural man lies sunk in a s sin and wrath, utterly unable to recover himself.

*Object.* (1.) If we be under an utter inability to do any good, how can God require us to do it?—*Ans.* God making man upright, Eccles. vii. 29. gave him a power to do every thing he should require of him ; this power man lost by his own fault. We were bound to serve God, and do whatsoever he commanded us, as being his creatures ; and also, ye were under the superadded tie of a covenant, for that effect. Now, we having, by our own fault, disabled ourselves, shall God lose his right of requiring our task, because we have thrown away the strength he gave us, wherewithal to perform it ? Has the creditor no right to require payment of his money, because the debtor has squandered it away, and is not able to pay him ? Truly, if God can require no more of us than we are able to do, we need no more to save us from wrath, but to make ourselves unable for every duty, and to incapacitate ourselves for serving of God any manner of way, as profane men frequently do ; and so the deeper one is immersed in sin, he will be the more secure from wrath ; for where God can require no duty of us, we do not sin in omitting it ; and where there is no sin, there can be no wrath. (As to what may be urged by the unhumiliated soul, against the putting of our stock in Adam's hand, the righteousness of that dispensation was cleared before.) But, moreover, the unrenewed man is daily throwing away the very remains of natural abilities ; that light and strength which are to be found amongst the ruins of mankind. Nay, farther, he will not believe his own utter inability to help himself ; so that out of his own mouth he will be condemned. Even those who make their natural impotency too good a cover to their sloth, do, with others, delay the work of turning to God from time to time ; under convictions, make large promises of reformation, which afterward they never regard ; and delay their repentance to a death-bed, as if they could help themselves in a moment ; which speaks them to be far from a due sense of their natural inability, whatever they pretend.

Now, if God can require of men the duty they are not able to do ; he can in justice punish them for their not doing it, notwithstanding of their inability. If he have power to exact the debt of obedience, he has also power to cast the insolvent debtor into prison, for his not

paying it. Further, though unregenerate men have no gracious abilities, yet they want not natural abilities, which nevertheless they will not improve. There are many things they can do, which they do not, they will not do them; and, therefore, their damnation will be just. Nay, all their inability to good is voluntary; they will not come to Christ, John v. 40. They will not repent, they will die, Ezek. xviii. 51. So they will be justly condemned; because they will not turn to God, nor come to Christ, but love their chains better than their liberty, and darkness rather than light, John iii. 19.

*Object.* (2.) Why do you then preach Christ to us; call us to come to him, to believe, repent, and use the means of salvation?—*Ans.* Because it is your duty so to do. It is your duty to accept of Christ as he is offered in the gospel; to repent of your sins, and to be holy in all manner of conversation: These things are commanded you of God; and his command, not your ability, is the measure of your duty. Moreover, these calls and exhortations are the means that God is pleased to make use of, for converting his elect; and working grace in their hearts; to them, *faith cometh by hearing*, Rom. x. 17. while they are unable to help themselves, as the rest of mankind are. Upon very good grounds may we, at the command of God, who raiseth the dead, go to their graves and cry in his name, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14. And seeing the elect are not to be known and distinguished from others before conversion, as the sun shines on the blind man's face, and the rain falls on the rocks as well as on the fruitful plains; so we preach Christ to all, and shoot the arrow at a venture, which God himself directs as he sees meet. Moreover, these calls and exhortations are not altogether in vain, even to those that are not converted by them. Such persons may be convinced, though they be not converted, although they be not sanctified by these means, yet they may be restrained by them, from running into that excess of wickedness which otherwise they would arrive at. The means of grace serve, as it were, to embalm many dead souls which are never quickened by them, though they do not restore them to life; yet they keep them from smell-

ing so rank as otherwise they would do.—*Finally*, Though ye cannot recover yourselves, nor take hold of the saving help offered to you in the gospel; yet even by the power of nature, ye may use the outward and ordinary means, whereby Christ communicates the benefits of redemption to ruined sinners, who are utterly unable to recover themselves out of the state of sin and wrath. Ye may, and can, if ye please, do many things that would set you in a fair way for help from the Lord Jesus Christ. Ye may go so far on, as to be not far from the kingdom of God, as the discreet scribe had done, Mark xii. 34. though (it would seem) he was destitute of supernatural abilities. Though ye cannot cure yourselves, yet ye may come to the pool, where many such diseased persons as ye are have been cured: Ye have none to put you into it, yet ye may lie at the side of it; and who knows but the Lord may return, and leave a blessing behind him, as in the case of the impotent man, recorded, John v. 5, 6, 7, 8. I hope Satan does not chain you to your houses, nor stake you down in your fields on the Lord's day; but ye are at liberty, and can wait at the posts of wisdom's door, if ye will. And when ye come thither, he doth not beat drums at your ears, that ye cannot hear what is said; there is no force upon you, obliging you to apply all you hear to others; ye may apply to yourselves what belongs to your state and condition; and when you go home, you are not lettered in your houses, where perhaps no religious discourse is to be heard; but ye may retire to some separate place, where ye can meditate, and pose your conscience with pertinent questions upon what ye have heard. Ye are not possessed with a dumb devil, that ye cannot get your mouths opened in prayer to God. Ye are not so driven out of your beds to your worldly business, and from your worldly business to your beds again, but ye might, if ye would, bestow some prayers to God upon the case of your perishing souls. Ye may examine yourselves, as to the state of your souls, in a solemn manner, as in the presence of God; ye may discern that ye have no grace, and that ye are lost and undone without it; and may cry unto God for it. These things are within the compass of natural abilities, and may be practised where there is no grace. It must aggravate your guilt, that you

will not be at so much pains about the state and condition of your precious souls. And if ye do not what you can, ye will be condemned not only for your want of power, but for your despising of it.

*Object.* (3.) But all this is needless, seeing we are wholly unable to keep ourselves out of the state of sin and wrath.—*Ans.* Give no place to that delusion, which sunder what God hath joined, namely the use of means, and a sense of our own impotency. If ever the Spirit of God graciously influence your souls, ye will become thoroughly sensible of your absolute inability, and yet take upon a vigorous use of means. Ye will do for yourselves as if ye were to do all; and yet overlook all ye do, as if ye had done nothing. Will ye do nothing for yourselves, because ye cannot do all? Lay down no such impious conclusion against your own souls. Do what you can, such may be, while ye are doing what ye can for yourselves. God will do for you what ye cannot. “Understandest thou what thou readest?” Said Philip to the eunuch, “How can I,” said he, “except some man should guide me?” Acts viii. 30, 31. He could not understand the scripture he read; yet he could read it; he did what he could, he read, and while he was reading, God sent him an interpreter. The Israelites were in a great strait at the Red Sea; and how could they help themselves when upon the one hand were mountains, and on the other, the enemy’s garrison; when Pharaoh and his host were before them, and the Red Sea before them? What could they do? “Speak unto the children of Israel,” saith the Lord to Moses, “that they go forward,” Exod. xiv. 15. To what end should they go forward? Can they make a passage to themselves through the sea? No; but let them go forward, saith the Lord; though they cannot turn sea into dry land, yet they can go forward to the shore, and so they did; and when they did what they could, God did for them what they could not do.

*Quest.* Has God promised to convert and save them who, in the use of means, do what they can towards their own relief?—*Ans.* We may not speak wickedly for God, natural men being strangers to the covenants of promise. Eph. ii. 12. have no such promise made to them: Nonetheless, they do not act rationally, unless they exert

powers they have, and do what they can. For, (1.) It is possible this course may succeed with them. If ye do what ye can, it may be, God will do for you what you cannot do for yourselves. This is sufficient to determine a man, in a matter of the utmost importance, such as this is, Acts viii. 22. "Pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee." Joel ii. 14. "Who knoweth if he will return?" If success may be, the trial should be. If, in a wreck at sea, all the sailors and passengers had betaken themselves each to a broken board for safety, and one of them should see all the rest perish, notwithstanding of their utmost endeavours to save themselves, yet the very possibility of escaping by that means would determine that one still to do his best with his board. Why then do ye not reason with yourselves, as the four lepers did who sat at the gates of Samaria? 2 Kings vii. 3, 4. Why do ye not say, If we sit still, not doing what we can, we die; let us put it to a trial, if we be saved, we shall live; if not, we shall but die? (2.) It is probable this course may succeed. God is good and merciful; he loves to surprise men with his grace, and is often found of them that sought him not, Isa. lxxv. 1. If ye do thus, ye are so far in the road of your duty; and ye are using the means which the Lord is wont to bless for mens spiritual recovery; ye lay yourselves in the way of the great Physician, and so it is probable ye may be healed. Lydia went, with others, to the place where prayer was wont to be made, and the Lord opened her heart, Acts xvi. 13, 14. Ye plough and sow, though nobody can tell you for certain, that ye will get so much as your seed again: Ye use means for the recovery of your health, though ye are not sure they will succeed. In these cases, probability determines you; and why not in this also? Importunity, we see, does very much with men; therefore pray, meditate, desire help of God; be much at the throne of grace, supplicating for grace, and do not faint. Though God regard not you, who, in your present state, are but one mass of sin, universally depraved, and vitiated in all the powers of your soul; yet he may regard his own ordinance. Though he regards not your prayers, your meditations, &c. yet he may regard prayer, meditation, and the like means of his own appointment, and so bless them to you. Wherefore, if ye will not do what ye

can ye are not only dead, but you declare yourselves ~~un~~ worthy of eternal life.

To conclude : Let the saints admire the freedom and power of grace, which came to them in their helpless condition, made their chains fall off, the iron gate to open to them, raised the fallen creatures, and brought them out of the state of sin and wrath, wherein they would have lain and perished, had they not been mercifully visited. Let the natural man be sensible of his utter inability to recover himself. Know thou art without strength, and cannot come to Christ, till thou art drawn. Thou art lost, and cannot help thyself. This may shake the foundation of thy hopes, who never saw thy absolute need of Christ and his grace ; but thinkest to shift for thyself, by thy civility, morality, drowsy wishes and duties ; and by a faith and repentance, which have sprung up out of thy natural powers, without the power and efficacy of the grace of Christ. O be convinced of thy absolute need of Christ, and his overcoming grace ; believe thy utter inability to recover thyself ; and so thou mayest be humbled, shaken out of thy self-confidence, and lie down in dust and ashes, groaning out thy miserable case before the Lord. A kindly sense of thy natural impotency, the impotency of depraved human nature, would be a step towards a delivery.

Thus far of man's natural state, the state of entire depravation.

# STATE III.

NAMELY,

STATE OF GRACE; OR BEGUN RECOVERY.



## HEAD I.

REGENERATION.

1 PETER i. 23.

*... again, not of corruptible Seed, but of incorrupt-  
ible the Word of God, which liveth and abideth  
r.*

proceed now to the state of grace, the state of begun recovery of human nature, into which, all partake of eternal happiness, are translated, soon-er, while in this world. It is the result of a change, made upon those who shall inherit eternal life. This change may be taken up in these two, (1.) In relation to their natural real state, the state of corruption, is a change made upon them in regeneration, their nature is changed. (2.) In opposition to their natural relative state, the state of wrath, there is a change made upon them, in their union with the Lord Jesus Christ; by which they are set beyond the reach of Satan's power. These, therefore, namely, regeneration and union with Christ, I design to handle, as the great comprehensive changes on a sinner, constituting him new in the state of grace.

Most of these we have in the text, together with the ordinary means, by which it is brought about.



The apostle here, to excite the saints to the study of holiness, and particularly of brotherly love, puts them in mind of their spiritual original. He tells them they were born again; and that of one incorruptible seed, the word of God. This speaks them to be brethren, partakers of the same new nature; which is the root from which holiness, and particularly brotherly love, doth spring. We are all sinners; we must be born again, that we may be saints. The simple word signifies to be begotten; and it may be read, Matth. xi. 11. *to be conceived*, Matth. i. 18. and *to be born*, Matth. ii. 1. Accordingly, the compound word used in the text may be taken in its full latitude, the last notion presupposing the two former; and so regeneration is a supernatural real change on the whole man, compared to natural or corporeal generation, as will afterward appear. The ordinary means of regeneration is called the seed, whereof the new creature is formed, by the incorruptible seed. Of such, indeed, our bodies are generated; but the spiritual seed, of which the new creature is generated, is incorruptible; namely, "the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The sound of the word of God passeth even as other sounds do; but the word lasteth, liveth, and abideth, in respect of its everlasting effects, on all upon whom it operates. This word, which by the gospel is preached unto you, ver. 25. imparted by the Spirit of God, is the means of regeneration; and by it are dead sinners raised to life.

DOCTRINE. *All men in the state of grace are born again.*—All gracious persons, namely, such as are in a state of favour with God, and endued with gracious qualities and dispositions, are regenerate persons. In discussing this subject, I shall shew what regeneration is: Next, what it is so called; and then apply the doctrine.

### *Of the Nature of Regeneration.*

1. For the better understanding of the nature of regeneration, take this along with you in the first place, that as there are false conceptions in nature, so there are in grace; and by these many are deluded, mistaking some partial changes made upon them for this great and thorough change. To remove such mistakes, let these few things

be considered, (1.) Many call the church their mother, whom God will not own to be his children, Cant. i. 6. *My mother's children (i. e. false brethren) were angry with me.* All that are baptized are not born again. Simon was baptized, yet still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 13, 23. Where Christianity is the religion of the country, many will be called by the name of Christ, who have no more of him but the name; and no wonder, seeing the devil had his goats among Christ's sheep, in these places, where but few professed the Christian religion, 1 John ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us.* (2.) Good education is not regeneration. Education may chain up men's lusts, but cannot change their hearts. A wolf is still a ravenous beast, though it be in chains. Joash was very devout during the life of his good tutor Jehoiada; but afterwards he quickly shewed what spirit he was of, by his sudden apostasy, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2, 17, 18. Good example is of mighty influence to change the outward man; but that change often goes off, when one changes his company; of which the world affords many sad instances. (3.) A turning from open profanity, to civility and sobriety, falls short of this saving change. Some are, for a while, very loose, specially in their younger years; but at length they reform, and leave their profane courses. Here is a change, yet but such an one as may be found in men, utterly void of the grace of God, and whose righteousness is so far from exceeding, that it doth not come up to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. (4.) One may engage in all the outward duties of religion, and yet not be born again. Though lead be cast into various shapes, it remains still but a base metal. Men may escape the pollutions of the world, and yet be but dogs and swine, 2 Pet. ii. 20, 22. All the external acts of religion are within the compass of natural abilities. Yea, hypocrites may have the counterfeit of all the graces of the Spirit; for we read of true holiness, Eph. iv. 23. and faith unfeigned, Tim. i. 5. which shews us, that there is a counterfeit holiness, and a feigned faith. (5.) Men may advance to a great deal of strictness in their own way of religion, and yet be strangers to the new birth, Acts xxvi. 5. "After the most strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee."

Nature has its own unsanctified strictness in religion. Pharisees had so much of it, that they looked on a little better than a mere libertine. A man whose conscience hath been awakened, and who lives under influence of the covenant of works, what will he that is within the compass of natural abilities? In truth, though it came out of a hellish mouth, that for skin, all that a man hath, will he give for his life. ii. 4. (6.) One may have sharp soul-exercises and yet die in the birth. Many have been in pain have but, as it were, brought forth wind. There are sore pangs and throes of conscience, which turn to nothing at last. Pharaoh and Simon Magus had such convulsions as made them desire the prayers of others for them. Pharaoh repented himself; and under terrors of conscience, he brought back his ill-gotten pieces of silver. All is not gold that glistens. Trees may blossom fairly in the spring, or no fruit is to be found in the harvest; and some have sharp soul-exercises, which are nothing but fore-tastes of death.

The new birth, however in appearance hopefully may be marred two ways. *First*, Some, like Zerah, Gen. xxxviii. 28, 29. are brought to the birth, but go back to death. They have sharp convictions for a while; but these soon pass, and they turn as careless about their salvation, as ever; and usually worse than ever; their last state is worse than their first, Mat. xii. 45. They get away from grace, but not converting grace; and that goes off as the light of the declining day, till it issues in night darkness. *Secondly*, Some, like Ishmael, Gen. xvi. 1, 2. are born before the time of the promise. They take up with a mere law-work, and stay not till the promise of the gospel. They snatch at comfort, not waiting till it be given them; and foolishly draw comfort from the law that wounded them. They apply the healing plaister to themselves, before their wounds are sufficiently searched. The law, that rigorous husband, severely beats them, and throws in curses and venoms upon their souls; then they fall a-reforming, promising, mourning, promising, and vowing, till this ghostly banquet is done, they fall asleep again in the arms of the law, but they are never shaken out of themselves and the

righteousness, nor brought forward to Jesus Christ. *Lastly*, There may be a wonderful moving of the affections, in souls that are not at all touched with regenerating grace. Where there is no grace, there may notwithstanding be a flood of tears, as in Esau, who found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, Heb. xii. 7. There may be great flashes of joy; as in the hearers of the word, represented in the parable of the stony ground, who anon with joy receive it, Matth. xiii. 20. There may be also great desire after good things, and great delight in them too; as in these hypocrites described, Isa. viii. 2. "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways.—They take delight in approaching unto God." How high they may sometimes stand, who yet fall away, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. They may be enlightened, taste of the heavenly gift, be partakers of the Holy Ghost, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. Common operations of the divine Spirit, like a flood, make a strange turning of things upside down. And when they are over, all runs again in the ordinary channel. All these things may be where the sanctifying spirit of Christ never rests upon the soul, but the stony heart still remains; and in that case, these affections cannot it wither, because they have no root.

But regeneration is a real thorough change, whereby the man is made a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. The Lord God makes the creature a new creature, as the goldsmith melts down the vessel of dishonour, and makes it a vessel of honour. Man is, in respect of his natural state, altogether disjointed by the fall; every faculty of the soul is, it were, dislocate; in regeneration the Lord looseth every joint, and sets it right again. Now this change made in regeneration is,

1. A change of qualities or dispositions: It is not a change of the substance, but of the qualities of the soul. vicious qualities are removed, and the contrary dispositions are brought in their room. "The old man is put off," Eph. iv. 22. "the new man is put on," ver. 24. Man lost none of the rational faculties of his soul by sin; he had an understanding still, but it was darkened; he had a will, but it was contrary to the will of God. So in regeneration there is not a new substance created, but new

qualities are infused ; light instead of darkness, righteousness instead of unrighteousness.

2. It is a supernatural change ; he that is born again is born of the Spirit, John iii. 5. Great changes may be made by the power of nature, especially when assisted by external revelation. And nature may be so elevated by the common influences of the Spirit, that one may thereby be turned into another man, (as Saul was, 1 Sam. x. 6) who yet never becomes a new man. But in regeneration nature itself is changed, and we become partakers of the divine nature ; and this must needs be a supernatural change. How can we, that are dead in trespasses and sins, renew ourselves, more than a dead man can raise himself out of his grave ? Who, but the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, can form Christ in a soul, changing it into the same image ? Who, but the Spirit of sanctification can give the new heart ? Well may we say, when we see man thus changed, *This is the finger of God.*

3. It is a change into the likeness of God, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "We—beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image." Every thing that generates, generates its like ; the child bears the image of the parent ; and they that are born of God bear God's image. Man aspiring to be as God, made himself like the devil. In his natural state he resembles the devil, as the child doth the father, John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil." But when this happy change comes, the image of Satan is defaced, and the image of God restored. Christ himself, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, is the pattern after which the new creature is made, Rom. viii. 29. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Hence he is said to be conformed in the regeneration, Gal. iv. 19.

4. It is an universal change ; all things become new, 2 Cor. v. 17. It is a blessed leaven, that leavens the whole lump, the whole spirit, and soul and body. Original sin infects the whole man ; and regenerating grace, which is the salve, goes as far as the sore. This fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness ; goodness of the mind, goodness of the will, goodness of the affections, goodness of the whole man. One gets not only a new head to know re-

ligion, or a new tongue to talk of it ; but a new heart to love and embrace it, in the whole of his conversation. When the Lord opens the sluice of grace on the soul's new birthday, the waters run through the whole man, to purify and make him fruitful. In these natural changes spoken of before, there are, as it were, pieces of new cloth put into an old garment ; a new life sewed to an old heart ; but the gracious change is a thorough change, a change both of heart and life.

5. Yet it is but an imperfect change. Though every part of the man is renewed, there is no part of him perfectly renewed. As an infant has all the parts of a man, but none of them are come to their perfect growth ; so regeneration brings a perfection of parts, to be brought forward in the gradual advances of sanctification, 1 Pet. ii. 2. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Although in regeneration there is a heavenly light let into the mind, yet there is still some darkness there ; though the will is renewed, it is not perfectly renewed ; there is still some of the old inclination to sin remaining ; and thus it will be, till that which is in part be done away, and the light of glory come. Adam was created at his full stature, but they that are born must have their time to grow up ; so these that are born again do come forth into the new world of grace but imperfectly holy ; though Adam being created upright was at the same time perfectly righteous, without the least mixture of sinful imperfection.

*Lastly,* Nevertheless it is a lasting change, which never goes off. The seed is incorruptible, saith the text ; and so is the creature that is formed of it. The life given in regeneration, whatever decays it may fall under, can never be utterly lost : His seed remaineth in him, who is born of God, 1 John iii. 9. Though the branches should be cut down, the root shall abide in the earth ; and being watered with the dew of heaven, shall sprout again ; for, "The root of the righteous shall not be moved," Prov. xii. 3. But to come to particulars :

*First,* In regeneration the mind is savingly enlightened : There is a new light let into the understanding, so that they who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord, Eph. v. 8. The beams of the light of life make their way into the dark dungeon of the heart ; then night

is over, and the morning light is come, which will shine more and more unto the perfect day. Now the man is illuminated,

1. In the knowledge of God. He has far other thoughts of God than ever he had before, Hos. ii. 20. "I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." The Spirit of the Lord brings him back to that question, What is God? And catechiseth him anew upon that grand point, so as he is made to say, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes seeth thee," Job xlii. 5. The spotless purity of God, his exact justice, his all-sufficiency, and other glorious perfections revealed in his word, are, by this new light, discovered to the soul, with a plainness and certainty that doth as far exceed the knowledge it had of these things before, as ocular demonstration exceeds common fame: For now he sees what he only heard of before.

2. He is enlightened in the knowledge of sin. He hath other thoughts of it than he was wont to have. Formerly his sight could not pierce through the cover Satan laid over it; but now the Spirit of God strips it before him, wipes off the paint and fairing; and he sees it in its native colours, as the worst of evils; *exceeding sinful*, Rom. vii. 12. O what deformed monsters do formerly beloved lusts appear! Were they right eyes, he would pluck them out; were they right hands, he would consent to their cutting off. He sees how offensive sin is to God, how destructive it is to the soul; and calls himself fool, for fighting so long against the Lord, and harbouring that destroyer as a bosom friend.

3. He is instructed in the knowledge of himself. Regenerating grace causeth the prodigal to come to himself, Luke xv. 17. and makes men full of eyes within, knowing every one the plague of his own heart. The mind being savingly enlightened, the man sees how desperately corrupted his nature is; what enmity against God and his holy law has long lodged there; so that his soul lothes itself. No open sepulchre, no puddle, so vile and loathsome in his eyes as himself, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight." He is no worse than he was before; but the sun is shining; and so these pollutions are seen, which he could not discern,

then there was no dawning in him ; as the word is, a. viii. 20. while as yet the day of grace was not broken with him.

4. He is enlightened in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, Cor. i. 3, 24. " But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The truth is, unregenerate men, though capable of preaching Christ, have not (properly speaking) the knowledge of him, but only an opinion, a good opinion of him ; as one is of many controverted points of doctrine, wherein he is far from certainty. As when ye meet with a stranger upon the road, he behaving himself discreetly, ye conceive a good opinion of him ; and, therefore, willingly converse with him ; but yet ye will not commit your money to him ; because, though you have a good opinion of the man, he is a stranger to you ; ye do not know him. So many they think well of Christ, but they will never commit themselves to him ; seeing they know him not. But saving illumination carries the soul beyond opinion, to the certain knowledge of Christ and his excellency, 1 Thes. i. 5. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." The light of grace thus discovers the suitableness of the mystery of Christ, to the divine perfections, and to the sinner's case. Hence the regenerate admire the glorious plan of salvation through Christ crucified, lay their whole weight upon it, and heartily acquiesce therein ; for whatever he says to others, he is to them *Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God*. But unrenewed men, not seeing this, are offended in him ; they will not venture their souls in at bottom, but betake themselves to the broken boards of their own righteousness. The same light convincingly discovers a superlative worth, a transcendent glory and excellency in Christ ; which darken all created excellencies, as the rising sun makes the stars to hide their heads ; and so engages the merchant-man to sell all that he hath, to buy the one pearl of great price, Matth. xiii. 45, 46. makes the soul well content to take Christ for all, and instead of all. Even as an unskilful merchant, to whom he offereth a pearl of great price, for all his petty wares,



dares not venture on the bargain ; for though he thinks, that one pearl may be more worth than all he has, yet he is not sure of it ; but when a jeweller comes to him, and assures him it is worth double all his wares, he then greedily embraceth the bargain, and chearfully parts with all that he has for that pearl. *Finally*, This illumination in the knowledge of Christ convincingly discovereth to men a fulness in him, sufficient for the supply of all their wants ; enough to satisfy the boundless desires of an immortal soul. They are persuaded such fulness is in him, and that in order to be communicated, they depend upon it, as a certain truth ; and, therefore, their souls take up their eternal rest in him.

4. The man is instructed in the knowledge of the vanity of the world, Psal. cxix. 96. " I have seen an end of all perfection." Regenerating grace elevates the soul, sets it, as it were, amongst the stars, from whence this earth cannot but appear a little, yea, a very little thing ; even as heaven appeared before, while the soul was immersed in the earth. Grace brings a man into a new world ; while this world is reputed but a stage of vanity, an howling wilderness, a valley of tears. God hath hung the sign of vanity at the door of all created enjoyments ; yet how do men throng into the house, calling and looking for some what that is satisfying ; even after it has been a thousand times told them, there is no such thing in it, it is not to be got there, Isa. lvi. 10. " Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy ways ; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope." Why are men so foolish ? The truth of the matter lies here, they do not see by the light of grace, they do not spiritually discern, that sign of vanity. They have often indeed made a rational discovery of it ; but can they truly wean the heart from the world ? Nay, no more the painted fire can burn off the prisoner's bands. But the light of grace is the light of life, powerful and efficacious. *Lastly*, (To sum up all in one word,) In regeneration the mind is enlightened in the knowledge of spiritual things, 1 John ii. 20. " Ye have an unction from the Holy one," (that is, from Jesus Christ, Rev. iii. 18. is an allusion to the sanctuary, whence the holy oil was brought to anoint the priests,) " and ye know all things, viz. necessary to salvation. Though men be not book

learned, if they be born again, they are Spirit-learned; for all such are taught of God, John vi. 45. The Spirit of regeneration teacheth them what they knew not before; and what they did know, as by the ear only, he teacheth them over again, as by the eye. The light of grace is an overcoming light, determining men to assent to divine truths on the mere testimony of God. It is no easy thing for the mind of man to acquiesce in divine revelation. Many pretend great respect to the scriptures; whom, nevertheless, the clear scripture testimony will not divorce from their preconceived opinions. But this illumination will make mens minds run, as captives, after Christ's chariot wheels; which, for their part, shall be allowed to drive over, and cast down their own imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, 2 Cor. x. 5. It will make them receive the kingdom of God as a little child, Mark x. 15. who thinks he has sufficient ground to believe any thing, if his father do but say it is so.

*Secondly*, The will is renewed. The Lord takes away the stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. And so, of stones raiseth up children to Abraham. Regenerating grace is powerful and efficacious, and gives the will a new set. It does not indeed force it; but sweetly, yet powerfully draws it, so that his people are willing in the day of his power, Psal. cx. 3. There is heavenly oratory in the Mediator's lips, to persuade sinners, Psal. xlv. 2. "Grace is poured into thy lips." There are cords of a man, and bands of love, in his hands, to draw them after him, Hos. xi. 4. Love makes a net for elect souls, which will infallibly catch them, and hail them to land. The cords of Christ's love are strong cords; and they need to be so; for every sinner is heavier than a mountain of brass; and Satan, together with the heart itself, draw the contrary way. But love is strong as death; and the Lord's love to the soul he died for is strongest love; which acts so powerfully, that it must come off victorious.

1. The will is cured of its utter inability to will what is good. While the opening of the prison to them that are bound is proclaimed in the gospel, the Spirit of God comes to the prison door, opens it, goes to the prisoner, and by the power of his grace makes his chains fall off; breaks

the bond of iniquity, wherewith he was held in sin, so he could neither will nor do any thing truly good ; but he is brought forth into a large place. " Working in him both will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 13. " It is that the soul, that was fixed to the earth, can rise heavenward ; the withered hand is restored, and can be stretched out.

2. There is wrought in the will a fixed aversion to sin. In regeneration, a man gets a new spirit put within him Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and that spirit lusteth against the flesh Gal. v. 17. The sweet morsel of sin, so greedily swallowed down, he now loathes, and would fain be rid of it ; even as willingly as one that had drunk a cup of poison would throw it up again. When the spring is stopped, the mud lies in the well unmoved ; but when once the spring is cleared, the waters springing up, will wash the mud away by degrees. Even so, while a man continues in an unregenerate state, sin lies at ease in the heart ; but as soon as the Lord strikes the rocky heart with the rod of his strength, in the day of conversion, grace is in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life, John iv. working away natural corruption, and gradually purifying the heart, Acts xv. 9. The renewed will riseth up against sin, strikes at the root thereof, and the branches too. Lusts are now grievous, and the soul endeavours to subvert them ; the corrupt nature is the source of all evil ; and, therefore, the soul will be often laying it before the great Physician. O what sorrow, shame, and self-loathing fill the heart, in the day that grace makes its triumphant entrance into it. For now the madman is come to himself, and the remembrance of his follies cannot but cut him to the heart.

*Lastly,* The will is endued with an inclination, bent, and propensity to good. In its depraved state, it lay quite another way, being prone and bent to evil only ; but now, by a pull of the omnipotent all-conquering arm, it is drawn from evil to good, and gets another set. And as the former set was natural, so this is natural too, in respect of the new nature given in regeneration, which has its own holy lustings, as well as the corrupt old nature hath its sinful lustings, Gal. v. 17. The will, as renewed, inclines and points towards God and godliness. When

God made man, his will, in respect of its intention, was directed towards God, as his chief end ; in respect of its choice, it pointed towards that which God willed. When man unmade himself, his will was framed into the very reverse hereof ; he made himself his chief end, and his own will his law. But when man is new made, in regeneration, grace rectifies this disorder in some measure, though not perfectly indeed ; because we are but renewed in part, while in this world. It brings back the sinner, out of himself, to God as his chief end, truly, though not perfectly, Psalm lxxiii. 25. " Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Phil. i. 21. " For me to live is Christ." It makes him to deny himself, and whatever way he turns, to point habitually towards God, who is the center of the gracious soul, its home, its dwelling place in all generations, Psalm xc. 1. By regenerating grace, the will is framed into a conformity to the will of God. It is conformed to his preceptive will, being endued with holy inclinations, agreeable to every one of his commands. The whole law is impressed on the gracious soul ; every part of it is written over on the renewed heart. And although remaining corruption makes such blots in the writing, that oft times the man himself cannot read it ; yet he that wrote it, can read it at all times ; it is never quite blotted out, nor can be. What he has written, it shall stand ; " For this is the covenant,—I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts," Heb. viii. 10. And it is a covenant of salt, a perpetual covenant. It is also conformed to his providential will ; so that the man will no more be master of his own process, nor carve out his lot for himself. He learns to say from his heart, " The will of the Lord be done, he shall chuse our inheritance for us," Psal. xlvii. 4. Thus the will is disposed to fall in with those things, which, in its depraved state, it could never be reconciled to.

Particularly, (1.) The Lord is reconciled to the covenant of peace. The Lord God promiseth a covenant of peace to sinners ; a covenant which he himself hath framed, and registered in the Bible ; but they are not pleased with it ; nay, an unrenewed heart cannot be pleased with it. Were it put into their hands, to frame it according to

their mind, they would blot many things out of it, which God has put in; and put in many things which God has kept out. But the renewed heart is entirely satisfied with the covenant, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for it is all my salvation, and all my desire." Though the covenant could not be brought down to their depraved will, their will is, by grace, brought up to the covenant; they are well pleased with it; there is nothing in it they wish to have out, nor is any thing left out of it which they wish to have in. (2.) The will is disposed to receive Christ as the Lord. The soul is content to submit to him. Regenerating grace undermines, and brings down the tower of imaginations of the heart, raised up against its rightful Lord; it breaks the iron sinew, which kept the sinner from bowing to him, and disposed him to be no more stiff-necked, but to yield to himself. He is willing to take on the yoke of Christ's commands, to take up the cross and follow him. He is content to take Christ on any terms. Psal. cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

Now, the mind being savingly enlightened and the will renewed, the sinner is thereby determined and enabled to answer the gospel call. So the main work in regeneration is done; the fort of the heart is taken; there is room made for the Lord Jesus Christ, in the innermost parts of the soul; the outer door of the will being now opened to him as well as the inner door of the understanding. In one word, Christ is passively received into the heart; he comes into the soul by his quickening Spirit, whereby spiritual life is given to the man, who in himself was dead to sin. And his first vital act we may conceive to be an active receiving of Jesus Christ, discerned in his glorious excellencies; that is, a believing on him, a closing with him, as discerned, offered, and exhibited in the word of his grace, the glorious gospel; the immediate effect of which is union with him, John i. 12, 13. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Eph. iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

Christ having taken the heart by storm, and triumphantly entered into it, in regeneration, the soul by faith yields itself to him, as it is expressed, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Thus this glorious King, who came into the heart by his Spirit, dwells in it by faith. The soul being drawn, runs ; and, being effectually called, comes.

*Thirdly*, In regeneration there is a happy change made on the affections ; they are both rectified and regulated.

I. This change rectifies the affections, placing them on suitable objects, 2 Thess. iii. 5. "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God." The regenerate man's desires are rectified ; they are set on God himself, and the things above. He who before cried with the world, "Who will shew us any good ?" he changes his note, and says, "Lord lift up the light of thy countenance upon us," Psal. iv. 6. Sometimes he saw no beauty in Christ, for which he was to be desired ; but now he is all desires, he is altogether lovely, Cant. v. 16. The main stream of his desires is turned to run towards God ; for there is the one thing he desireth, Psal. xxvii. 4. He desires to be holy, as well as to be happy ; and rather to be gracious than great. His hopes, which before were low and staked down to things on earth, are now raised, and set on the glory which is to be revealed. He entertains the hope of eternal life, founded on the word of promise, Tit. i. 2. Which hope he has, as an anchor of the soul, fixing the heart under trials, Heb. vi. 18. And it puts him upon purifying himself, even as God is pure, John iii. 3. For he is begotten again unto a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. His love is raised and set on God himself, Psal. xxviii. 1. on his holy law, Psal. cxix. 97. Though it strike against his most beloved lust, he says, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," Rom. vii. 12. He loves the ordinances of God, Psal. lxxxiv. 1. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts ?" Being passed from death unto life, he loves the brethren, (1 John iii. 14.) the people of God, as they are called, 1 Pet. i. 10. He loves God for himself, and what is God's, for his sake. Yea, as being a child of God, he loves his own enemies. His heavenly Father is compassionate and benevolent ; he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust ; and, therefore, he is in the

like manner disposed, Matth. v. 44, 45. His hatred is turned against sin in himself and others, Psal. ci. 3. "I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me." He groans under the remains of it, and longs for deliverance, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" His joys and delights are in God the Lord, in the light of his countenance, in his law, and in his people; because they are like him. Sin is what he chiefly fears; it is a fountain of sorrow to him now, though formerly a spring of pleasure.

2. It regulates the affections placed on suitable objects. Our affections, when placed on the creature, are naturally exorbitant; when we joy in it, we are apt to over-joy; and when we sorrow, we are ready to sorrow over-much: But gracebridles these affections, clips their wings, and keeps them within bounds, that they overflow not at all their banks. It makes a man hate his father and mother, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life also, comparatively; that is, to love them less than he loves God, Luke xiv. 26. It also sanctifies lawful affections; bringing them forth from right principles to right ends. There may be unholy desires after Christ and his grace; as when men desire Christ, not from any love to him, but merely out of love to themselves. Give us of your oil, said the foolish virgins, for our lamps are gone out, Matth. xxv. 8. There may be an unsanctified sorrow for sin; as when one sorroweth for it, not because it is displeasing to God, but only because of the wrath annexed to it, as did Pharaoh, Judas, and others. So a man may love his father and mother, from mere natural principles, without any respect to the command of God binding him thereto. But grace sanctifies the affections in such cases, making them to run in a new channel of love to God, respect to his commands, and regard to his glory. Again, grace screws up the affections where they are too low. It gives the chief seat in them to God; and pulls down all other rivals, whether persons or things, making them lie at his feet, Psalm lxxiii. 24. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none up on earth that I desire besides thee." He is loved for himself; and other persons or things, for his sake. What is lovely in them, to the renewed heart, is some ray of the

vinegoodness appearing in them; for, unto gracious souls  
 ey shine only by borrowed light. This accounts for the  
 into loving all men, and yet hating those that hate God,  
 and contemning the wicked as vile persons. They hate  
 and condemn them for their wickedness; there is nothing  
 God in that; and, therefore, nothing lovely nor honour-  
 able in it; but they love them for their commendable quali-  
 ties, or perfections, whether natural or moral; because,  
 whomsoever these are, they are from God, and can be  
 traced to him as their fountain. *Finally*, Regenerating  
 grace sets the affections so firmly on God, that the man is  
 disposed, at God's command, to quit his hold of every  
 thing else, in order to keep his hold of Christ; to hate fa-  
 ther and mother, in comparison with Christ, Luke xiv.  
 . It makes even lawful enjoyments, like Joseph's man-  
 , to hang loose about a man; that he may quit them when  
 is in hazard to be ensnared by holding them.

If the stream of our affections was never thus turned, we  
 : doubtless going down the stream into the pit. If the  
 t of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life,  
 re the throne in our hearts, which should be possessed  
 the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; if we never had so  
 ch love to God as to ourselves; if sin has been some-  
 at bitter to us, but never so bitter as suffering, never so  
 er as the pain of being weaned from it; truly we are  
 ngers to this saving change. For grace turns the affec-  
 as up-side down, whenever it comes into the heart.

*Fourthly*, The conscience is renewed. Now, that a new  
 it is set up in the soul in regeneration, conscience is  
 ightened, instructed, and informed. That candle of  
 Lord, Prov. xx. 27. is now snuffed and brightened;  
 as it shines, and sends forth its light into the most re-  
 d corners of the heart, discovering sins which the soul  
 is not aware of before; and in a special manner discover-  
 the corruption or depravity of nature, that seed and  
 wn whence all actual sins proceed. This produces the  
 r complaint, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I  
 I who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"  
 at conscience, which lay sleeping in the man's bosom  
 ore, is now awakened, and makes its voice to be heard  
 ough the whole soul; and, therefore, there is no more  
 t for him in the sluggard's bed; he must get up and be  
 ng, arise, haste and escape for his life. It powerfully



incites to obedience, even in the most spiritual acts, which lay not within the view of the natural conscience; and powerfully restrains from sin, even from those sins which do not lie open to the observation of the world. It urges the sovereign authority of God, to which the heart is now reconciled, and which it willingly acknowledges; and so it engageth the man to his duty, whatever be the hazard from the world; for it fills the heart so with the fear of God, that the force of the fear of man is broken. This hath engaged many to put their life in their hand, and follow the cause of religion they once contemned, and resolutely walk in the path they formerly abhorred, Gal. i. 23. "He which persecuted us in time past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." Guilt now makes the conscience to smart. It hath bitter remorse for sins past, which fills the soul with anxiety, sorrow, and self-loathing. And every new reflection on these sins is apt to affect, and make its wounds bleed afresh with regret. It is made tender, in point of sin and duty, for the time to come; being once burnt, it dreads the fire, and fears to break the hedge, where it was formerly bit by the serpent. Finally, The renewed conscience drives the sinner to Jesus Christ, as the only physician that can draw out the sting of guilt; and whose blood alone can purge the conscience from dead works, Heb. ix. 14. refusing all ease offered to it from any other hand. And this is an evidence, that the conscience is not only fired, as it may be in an unregenerate state, but reconciled also with regenerating grace.

*Fifthly*, As the memory wanted not its share of depravity, it is also bettered by regenerating grace. The memory is weakened with respect to those things that are not worth their room therein; and men are taught to forget injuries, and drop their resentments, Matth. v. 44, 45. "Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.—That ye may be (*i. e.* appear to be) the children of your Father which is in heaven." It is strengthened for spiritual things. We have Solomon's receipt for an ill memory, Prov. iii. 1. *My son, saith he, forget not my law.* But how shall it be kept in mind? *Let thine heart keep my commandments.* Grace makes a heart memory, even where there is no good head memory, Psal. cxix. 11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart.* The heart, truly touched with the powerful sweetness of truth, will help the memory to re-

tain what is so relished. Did divine truths make deeper impressions on our hearts, they would thereby impress themselves with more force on our memories, Psal. cxix. 93. "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me." Grace sanctifies the memory. Many have large, but unsanctified memories, which serve only to gather knowledge, whereby to aggravate their condemnation; but a renewed memory serves to remember his commandments to do them, Psal. ciii. 18. It is a sacred store house, from whence a Christian is furnished in his way to Zion; for faith and hope are often supplied out of it, in a dark hour. It is the store house of former experiences; and these are the believer's way-marks, by noticing of which he comes to know where he is, even in a dark time, Psal. xlii. 6. "O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan," &c. It also helps the soul to godly sorrow and self-loathing, presenting old guilt anew before the conscience; and making it bleed afresh, though the sin be already pardoned, Psal. xxv. 7. "Remember not the sins of my youth." And where unpardoned guilt is lying on the sleeping conscience, it is often employed to bring in a word, which in a moment sets the whole soul astir: As when Peter remembered the words of Jesus, he went out and wept bitterly, Matth. xxvi. 75. The word of God, laid up in a sanctified memory, serves a man to resist temptations, puts the sword in his hand against his spiritual enemies, and is a light to direct his steps in the way of religion and righteousness.

*Sixthly,* There is a change made on the body, and the members thereof, in respect of their use; they are consecrated to the Lord. Even the body is for the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. 13. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost, ver. 19. The members thereof, that were formerly instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, become instruments of righteousness unto God, Rom. vi. 13. "Servants to righteousness unto holiness," ver. 19. The eye that conveyed sinful imaginations into the heart is under a covenant, Job xxxi. to do so no more; but to serve the soul in viewing the works, and reading the word of God. The ear that had often been death's porter, to let in sin, is turned to be the gate of life, by which the word of life enters the soul. The tongue that set on fire the whole course of nature is restored to

*Rightly,* There is a likeness betwixt the parent and child. Every thing that generates, generates its like: the regenerate are partakers of the divine nature; and the moral perfections of the divine nature are in measure and degree communicated to the renewed soul: thus the divine image is retrieved; so that, as the child resembles the father, the new creature resembles God self, being holy as he is holy.

*Lastly,* As there is no birth without pain, both mother and to the child, so there is great pain in bringing forth the new creature. The children have more of these birth-pains, whereby they are pricked in their souls. Acts ii. 37. The soul has sore pains when under affliction and humiliation: "A wounded spirit who can heal?" The mother is pained, Zion travails, Isa. lxxvi. sighs, groans, crieth, and hath hard labour, in her labours and members, to bring forth children to her. Gal. iv. 19. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." And never mother more feelingly touched with joy, that a man was born into the world, than she is upon the new birth of her children. But what is more remarkable than this, we read not only of our Lord Jesus Christ's sweat and toil of soul, Isa. liii. 11. but (what lies more directly to our purpose) of his pains, or pangs, as of one travail in child-birth; so the word used, Acts ii. 24. pre-signifies. Well may he call the new creature, as he called her dear-bought son Benoni, *i. e.* The son of sorrow; and as she called another, Naphtali, *i. e.* wrestling; for the pangs of that travail put him to sweating and tears, Heb. v. 7. yea, in an agony and blood-sweat, Luke xxii. 44. And, in the end, he died of pangs; they became to him the pains of death, Acts

### *The Doctrine of Regeneration applied.*

USE I. By what is said, you may try whether you are in the state of grace or not. If ye be brought out of the state of wrath or ruin, into the state of grace or salvation, ye are new creatures, ye are born again. But ye may say, How shall we know whether we be born again or not?

*Ans.* Did you ask me, if the sun were risen, and how you should know whether it were risen or not? I would bid you look up to the heavens, and see it with your eyes. And would you know if the light be risen in your heart? Look in and, and see. Grace is light, and discovers itself: Look into thy mind, see if it has been illuminated in the knowledge of God. Hast thou been inwardly taught what God is? Where thine eyes ever turned inward to see thyself; the sinfulness of thy depraved state; the corruption of thy nature; the sins of thy heart and life? Wast thou ever let into a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin? Have thine eyes seen King Jesus in his beauty; the manifold wisdom of God in him, his transcendent excellency, and absolute fulness and sufficiency, with the vanity and emptiness of all things else? Next, What change is there on thy will? Are the fetters taken off, where-with it was sometimes bound up from moving heaven-wards? And has thy will got a new set? Dost thou find an aversion to sin, and a proneness to good wrought in thy heart? Is thy soul turned towards God, as thy chief end? Is thy will new moulded into some measure of conformity to the preceptive and providential will of God? Art thou heartily reconciled to the covenant of peace, and fixedly disposed to the receiving of Christ, as he is offered in the gospel? And as to a change on your affections, are they rectified and placed on right objects? Are your desires going on after God? Are they to his name and remembrance of him? Isa. xxvi. 8. Are your hopes in him? Is your love set upon him, and your hatred set against sin? Does your offending a good God affect your heart with sorrow, and do you fear sin more than suffering? Are your affections regulated? Are they, with respect to created comforts, brought down, as being too high; and with respect to God in Christ, screwed up, as being too low? Has he the chief seat in your heart? And are all your lawful worldly comforts and enjoyments laid at his feet? Has thy conscience been enlightened and awakened, refusing all ease, but from the application of the blood of a Redeemer? Is thy memory sanctified, thy body consecrated to the service of God? And art thou now walking in newness of life? Thus ye may discover, whether ye are born again or not.

But for your further help in this matter, I will discourse a little of another sign of regeneration, namely, The love of the brethren, an evidence whereby the weakest and most timorous saints have often had comfort, when they could have little or no consolation from other marks proposed to them. This the Apostle lays down, 1 John iii. 13. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." It is not to be thought, that the Apostle, by the brethren in this place, means brethren by a common relation to the first Adam, but to the second Adam, Christ Jesus : Because, however true it is, that universal benevolence, a good-will to the whole race of mankind, takes place in the renewed soul, as being a lively lineament of the divine image ; yet the whole context speaks of those that are the sons of God, ver. 1, 2. children of God, ver. 10. born of God, ver. 9. distinguishing betwixt the children of God and the children of the devil, ver. 10. betwixt these that are of the devil, ver. 8, 12. and these that are of God, ver. 10. And the text itself comes in as a reason why we should not marvel that the world hates the brethren, the children of God, ver. 13. How can we marvel at it, seeing the love of the brethren is an evidence of one's having passed from death to life ? And therefore, it were absurd to look for that love amongst the men of the world, who are dead in trespasses and sins. They cannot love the brethren ; no marvel then that they hate them. Wherefore it is plain, that by brethren here, are meant brethren by regeneration.

Now, in order to set this mark of regeneration in a true light, consider these three things : (1.) This love to the brethren is a love to them as such. Then do we love them in the sense of the text, when the grace or image of God in them is the chief motive of our love to them. When we love the godly for their godliness, the saints for their sanctity or holiness ; then we love God in them, and so may conclude, we are born of God : For, "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him," 1 John v. 1. Hypocrites may love saints, on account of a civil relation to them ; because of their obliging conversation ; for their being of the same opinion with themselves in religious matters ; and

discerning, bear the image of God. They that can-  
ve a gracious person in rags, but confine their love  
se of them who wear gay cloathing, have not this  
o the brethren in them. Those who can confine  
love to a party, to whom God has not confined his  
, are souls too narrow to be put among the children.  
at points soever men differ from us, in their judg-  
or way, yet if they appear to agree with us, in love  
d, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in bearing his  
; we will love them as brethren, if we ourselves be  
: heavenly family. And, (3.) If this love be in us,  
ore grace any person appears to be possessed of, he  
e the more beloved by us. The more vehemently  
oly fire of grace doth flame in any, the hearts of  
Christians will be the more warmed in love to them.  
not with the saints as with many other men, who  
themselves the standard for others ; and love them  
as they think they are like themselves. But, if they  
to out-shine and darken them, their love is turned  
red and envy ; and they endeavour to detract from  
ie praise of their exemplary piety ; because nothing  
eth with them in the practice of religion, that goes  
d their own measure. What of the life and power

who in a little time lose it again ; because, while they hear the word preached, they make application of it ; but do not consider of these things more deliberately and leisurely when alone. The action is too sudden and short, to give lasting comfort. And it is often so indeliberate, that it has bad consequences. Therefore, set about this work at home, after earnest and serious prayer to God, for his help in it. Complain not of your want of time, while the night follows the busy day ; or of place, while the fields and out-houses are to be got. (2.) Renew your repentance before the Lord. Guilt lying on the conscience, unrepented of, may darken all your evidences and marks of grace. It provokes the Spirit of grace to depart ; and when he goes, our light ceases. It is not fit time for a saint to read his evidences, when the candle is blown out by some conscience-wounding guilt. *Lastly*, Exert the powers of the new nature ; let the graces of the divine Spirit in you discover themselves by action. If ye would know whether there is a sacred fire in your breast or not, ye must blow the coal ; for although it be a live-coal, yet if it be under the ashes, it will give you no light. Settle in your hearts a firm purpose, through the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to comply with every known duty, and watch against every known sin ; having a readiness of mind, to be instructed in what ye know not. If gracious souls would thus manage their inquiries into their state, it is likely they would have a comfortable issue. And if others would take such a solemn review, and make trial of their state impartially, sisting themselves before the tribunal of their own consciences, they might have a timely discovery of their own naughtiness : But the neglect of self-examination leaves most men under sad delusions, as to their state ; and deprives many saints of the comfortable sight of the grace of God in them.

But that I may afford some further help to true Christians, in their inquiries in their state, I shall propose and briefly answer, some cases or doubts, which may possibly hinder some persons from the comfortable view of their happy state. The children's bread must not be withheld, though while it is reached to them, the dogs should snatch at it.

**Case 1.** I doubt if I be regenerate, because I know the precise time of my conversion ; nor can I trace particular steps, in the way in which it was brought pass.—*Ans.* Though it is very desirable to be able to give an account of the beginning, and the gradual advances of the Lord's work upon our souls, as some saints can distinctly do ; howbeit, the manner of the Spirit's working is still a mystery ; yet this is not necessary to evidence the truth of grace. Happy he that can, in this case, as the blind man in the gospel, " One day I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." As when we see flames, we know there is fire, though we know not how or when it began ; so the truth of grace in us may be discerned, though we know not how, when, it was dropped into our hearts. If thou canst receive the happy change, which is wrought on thy soul ; thou findest thy mind is enlightened, thy will inclined to comply with the will of God in all things, especially fall in with the divine plan of salvation through a crucified Redeemer ; in vain dost thou trouble thyself, refuse comfort, because thou knowest not, how and in what way it was brought about.

**Case 2.** If I were a new creature, sin could not prevail against me as it doth.—*Ans.* Though we must not give pillows for hypocrites to rest their heads upon, who allege themselves in their sins, and make the doctrine of God's grace subservient to their lusts, lying down contentedly in the bond of iniquity, like men that are laden with golden chains ; yet it must be owned, the just shall falter seven times a-day, and iniquity may prevail against the children of God. But if thou art groaning under the weight of the body of death, the corruption of nature ; loathing thyself for the sins of thy heart and ; striving to mortify thy lusts ; fleeing daily to the blood of Christ for pardon ; and looking to his Spirit for sanctification ; though thou mayest be obliged to say with the Psalmist, " Iniquities prevail against me : " Yet thou must add with him, " As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away," Psal. lxxv. 3. The new creature doth not yet possess the house alone ; it dwells beside an ill neighbour ; namely, remaining corruption, relicts of depraved nature. These struggle together



gracious heart, than love to any creature enjoyment whatsoever; as appears when competition arises in such a manner, that the one or the other is to be foregone. Would you then know your case? Retire into your own hearts, and there lay the two in the balance, and try which of them weighs down the other. Ask thyself, as in the sight of God, whether thou wouldst part with Christ for the creature, or part with the creature for Christ, if thou wert left to thy choice in the matter? If you find your heart disposed to part with what is dearest to you in the world for Christ, at his call, you have no reason to conclude, you love the creature more than God; but, on the contrary, that you love God more than the creature; albeit you do not feel such violent motions in the love of God, as in the love of some created thing, Matth. x. 37. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." Luke xiv. 26. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother,—he cannot be my disciple." From which texts compared, we may infer, that he who hates, *i. e.* is ready to part with, father and mother for Christ, is, in our Lord's account, one that loves them less than him; and not one who loves father and mother more than him. Moreover, ye are to consider, there is a twofold love to Christ. (1.) There is a sensible love to him, which is felt as a dart in the heart; and makes a holy love-sickness in the soul, arising either from want of enjoyment, as in the case of the spouse, Cant. v. 8. "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love;" or else from the fullness of it, as in that case, Cant. ii. 5. "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love." These glowings of affections are usually wrought in young converts, who are ordinarily made to sing in the days of their youth, Hos. ii. 14. While the fire-edge is on the young convert, he looks on others reputed to be godly, and not finding them in such a temper and disposition as himself, he is ready to censure them; and think there is far less religion in the world than indeed there is. But when his own cup comes to settle below the brim, and he finds that in himself, which made him question the state of others, he is more humbled, and feels more

and more the necessity of daily recourse to the blood of Christ for pardon, and to the Spirit of Christ for sanctification ; and thus grows downwards in humiliation, self-loathing, and self-denial. (2.) There is a rational love to Christ, which, without these sensible emotions felt in the former case, evidences itself by a dutiful regard to the divine authority and command. When one bears such a love to Christ, though the vehement stirrings of affection be wanting, yet he is truly tender of offending a gracious God ; endeavours to walk before him unto all-pleasing ; and grieved at the heart, for what is displeasing unto him, 1 John v. 3. " For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." Now, although that sensible love doth not always continue with you, ye have no reason to account in a hypocritical fit, while the rational love remains with you, more than a faithful and loving wife needs question her love to her husband, when her fondness is abated.

*Case 5.* The attainments of hypocrites and apostates are a terror to me, and come like a shaking storm on me, when I am about to conclude from the marks of grace which I seem to find in myself, that I am in the state of grace.—*Ans.* These things should indeed stir us up to a most serious and impartial examination of ourselves ; but ought not to keep us in a continued suspense as to our state. Sirs, ye see the outside of hypocrites, their duties, their gifts, their tears, &c. but ye see not their inside ; ye do not discern their hearts, the bias of their spirits. Upon what ye see of them, ye found a judgment of charity, as to their state ; and ye do well to judge charitably in such a case, because ye cannot know the secret springs of their acting : But ye are speaking, and ought to have a judgment of certainty, as to your own state ; and, therefore, are to look in to that part of religion, which none in the world but yourselves can discern in you, and which ye can as little see in others. An hypocrite's religion may appear far greater than that of a sincere soul ; but, that which makes the greatest figure in the eyes of men, is often least worth before God. I would rather utter one of those groans the Apostle speaks of, Rom. viii. 26. than shed Esau's tears, have Balaam's prophetic spirit, or the joy of the stony-ground hearers. The fire that shall

try every man's work, will try, not of what bulk it is, but of what sort it is, 1 Cor. iii. 13. Now, ye may know what bulk of religion another has; and what though it be more bulky than your own? God doth not regard that: Why then do you make such a matter of it? It is impossible for you, without divine revelation, certainly to know of what sort another man's religion is; but ye may certainly know what sort your own is of, without extraordinary revelation; otherwise the Apostle would not exhort the saints to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, 2 Pct. i. 10. Therefore, the attainments of hypocrites and apostates should not disturb you in your serious inquiry into your own state. But I will tell you two things, wherein the meanest saints go beyond the most refined hypocrites. (1.) In denying themselves, renouncing all confidence in themselves, and their own works, acquiescing in, being well-pleased with, and venturing their souls upon God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, Mat. v. 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And chap. ix. 6. "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." Phil. iii. 3. "We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (2.) In a real hatred of sin; being willing to part with every lust, without exception, and comply with every duty the Lord makes, or shall make known to them, Psal. cxix. 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Try yourselves by these.

*Case 6.* I see myself fall so far short of the saints mentioned in the scriptures, and of several excellent persons of my own acquaintance; that, when I look on them, I hardly look on myself as one of the same family with them.—*Ans.* It is indeed matter of humiliation, that we get not forward to that measure of grace and holiness, which we see is attainable in this life. This should make us more vigorously press towards the mark; but surely it is from the devil, that weak Christians make a rack for themselves of the attainments of the strong. And to yield to this temptation, is as unreasonable as for a child to dispute away his relation to his father, because *he is not of the same stature with his elder brethren.*

ere are saints of several sizes in Christ's family ; some  
ers, some young men, and some little children, 1 John  
13, 14.

*Case 7.* I never read in the word of God; nor did I  
r know of a child of God so tempted, and so left of  
d as I am ; and, therefore, no saint's case being like  
e, I cannot but conclude I am none of their number.

*Ans.* This objection arises to some, from their un-  
aintedness with the scriptures, and with experienced  
ristians. It is profitable in this case, to impart the  
tter to some experienced Christian friend, or to some  
lly Minister. This has been a blessed mean of peace  
some persons ; while their case, which appeared to be  
gular, has been evinced to have been the case of other  
ts. The scriptures give instances of very horrid temp-  
ons, wherewith the saints have been assaulted. Job  
s tempted to blaspheme ; this was the great thing the  
il aimed at, in the case of that saint, Job i. 11. " He  
I curse thee to thy face." Chap. ii. 9. " Curse God  
d die." Asaph was tempted to think, it was in vain  
e religious, which was in effect to throw off all re-  
on, Psalm lxxiii. 13. " Verily I have cleansed my  
rt in vain." Yea, Christ himself was tempted to cast  
self down from a pinnacle of the temple, and to wor-  
p the devil, Mat. iv. 6, 9. And many of the children  
God have not only been attacked with, but have ac-  
lly yielded to very gross temptations for a time. Peter  
ied Christ, and cursed and swore that he knew him  
, Mark xiv. 71. Paul, when a persecutor, compelled  
n the saints to blaspheme, Acts xxvi. 10, 11. Many  
he saints can, from their sad experience, bear witness  
very gross temptations, which have astonished their  
rits, made their flesh to tremble, and sickened their  
ies. Satan's fiery darts make terrible work, and will  
t pains to quench them, by a vigorous managing of the  
eld of faith, Eph. vi. 16. Sometimes, he makes such  
perate attacks, that never was one more put to it, in  
ining to and fro without intermission, to quench the  
-balls incessantly thrown into his house, by an enemy  
igning to burn the house about him, than the poor  
pted saint is, to repel satanical injections ; these horrid  
ptions, though they are a dreadful affliction, they are

not the sins of the tempted, unless they make them theirs by consenting to them. They will be charged upon the tempter alone, if they be not consented to ; and will no more be laid to the charge of the tempted party, than a bastard's being laid down at the chaste man's door will fix guilt upon him.

But, suppose neither Minister nor private Christian, to whom you go, can tell you of any who has been in your case ; yet you ought not thence to infer, that your case certainly is singular, far less to give over hopes ; for it is not to be thought, that every godly Minister, or private Christian, has had the experience of all the cases a child of God may be in. And we need not doubt, but some have had distresses known only to God, and their own consciences ; and so, to others these distresses are as if they had never been. Yea, and though the scriptures do contain suitable directions for every case a child of God can be in ; and these illustrated with a sufficient number of examples ; yet it is not to be imagined, there are in the scriptures, perfect instances of every particular case incident to the saints. Therefore, howbeit you cannot find an instance of your case in the scriptures, yet bring your case to it, and you shall find suitable remedies prescribed there for it. And study rather to make use of Christ for your case, who has salve for all sores, than to know if ever any was in your case. Though one should shew you an instance of your case, as an undoubted saint, yet none could promise it would certainly give you ease ; for a scrupulous conscience would readily find out some difference. And if nothing but a perfect conformity of another's case to yours will satisfy, it will be hard if not impossible to satisfy you. For it is with people's cases as with their natural faces ; though the faces of all men are of one make, and some are so very like others, that at first view we are ready to take them for the same ; yet if you view them more accurately, you will see something in every face, distinguishing it from all others, though possibly you cannot tell what it is : Wherefore I conclude, that if you can find in yourselves the marks of regeneration, proposed to you from the word ; you ought to conclude, you are in the state of grace, though your case were singular, which is indeed unlikely.

*c last.* The afflictions I meet with are strange and al. I doubt if ever a child of God was trysted with dispensations of providence as I am.—*Ans.* Much it was said on the preceding case may be helpful s. Holy Job was assaulted with this temptation,

1. “To which of the saints wilt thou turn?” But ected it, and held fast his integrity. The Apostle seth Christians may be tempted to think strange ming the fiery trial, 1 Pet. iv. 1. But they have of larger experience than Solomon’s who will veno say, *See! this is new*, Eccles. i. 10. And what h, in respect of the outward dispensations of Provi-, it happen to you according to the work of the d? You may be just notwithstanding, according to ion’s observe, Eccles. viii. 14. Sometimes we tra- ways, where we cannot perceive the prints of the f man or beast; yet we cannot from thence conclude, here was never any there before us; so, albeit thou not perceive the footsteps of the flock in the way of affliction, thou must not therefore conclude, thou art rst that ever travelled that road. But what if it were at thou wert indeed the first? Some saint or other be- to be the first, in drinking of each bitter cup the ave drunk of. What warrant have you or I to limit oly One of Israel to a trodden path, in his dispen- s towards us? “Thy way is in the sea, and thy n the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known,” t lxxvii. 19. If the Lord should carry you to hea- by some retired road, and let you in at a back door, speak; you would have no ground to complain. to allow sovereignty a latitude; be at your duty; et no affliction cast a veil over any evidences you wise have for your being in the state of grace: For, man knoweth either their love or hatred, by all that ore them,” Eccles. ix. 1.

§ II. Ye that are strangers to this new birth be cond of the absolute necessity of it. Are all in the state ice born again? Then ye have neither part nor lot who are not born again. I must tell you in the of our Lord and Saviour, (and O that he would them to your hearts,) “Ye must be born again,”

John iii. 7. And for your conviction, consider these few things :

*First*, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to qualify you to do any thing really good and acceptable to God. While you are not born again, your best works are but glittering sins ; for though the matter of them is good, they are quite marred in the making. Consider, (1.) That without regeneration there is no faith ; and, " Without faith, it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6. Faith is a vital act of the new-born soul. The Evangelist, shewing the different entertainment our Lord Jesus had from different persons, some receiving him, some rejecting him, points at regenerating grace as the true rise of that difference, without which never one would have received him. He tells us, that as many as received him were those which were born of God, John i. 11, 12, 13. Unregenerate men may presume, but true faith they cannot have. Faith is a flower that grows not in the field of nature. As the tree cannot grow without a root, neither can a man believe, without the new nature, whereof the principle of believing is a part. (2.) Without regeneration, a man's works are dead works. As is the principle, so must the effects be : If the lungs be rotten, the breath will be unsavoury ; and he who, at best, is dead in sin, his works, at best, will be but dead works. " Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure—being abominable and disobedient ; and unto every good work, reprobate," Tit. i. 15, 16. Could we say of a man, that he is more blameless in his life than any other in the world ; that he macerates his body with fasting ; and has made his knees as horns with continual praying ; but he is not born again ; that exception would mar all. As if one should say, There is a well proportioned body, but the soul is gone ; it is but a dead lump. This is a melting consideration. Thou dost many things materially good, but God saith, All these things avail not, as long as I see the old nature reigning in the man, Gal. vi. 15. For, in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision avail-eth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

If thou art not born again, (1.) All thy reformation is naught in the sight of God. Thou hast shut the door, but the thief is still in the house. It may be thou art not what once thou wast, yet thou art not what thou must be,

if ever thou seest heaven ; for, " Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. (2.) Thy prayers are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv. 8. It may be, others admire thy seriousness ; thou criest as for thy life ; but God accounts of the opening of thy mouth as one would account of the opening of a grave full of rottenness, Rom. iii. 13. " Their throat is an open sepulchre." Others are affected with thy prayers, which seem to them as if they would rend the heavens ; but God accounts them as the howling of a dog : " They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds," Hos. vii. 14. Others take thee for a wrestler and prevailer with God ; but he can take no delight in thee nor thy prayers neither, Isa. lxvi. 3. " He that killeth an ox, as if he slew a man ; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck ;—he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." Why that ? Because thou art yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. (3.) All thou hast done for God and his cause in the world, though it may be followed with temporal rewards, yet is lost as to divine acceptance. This is clear from the case of Jehu, who was indeed rewarded with a kingdom, for his executing due vengeance upon the house of Ahab, as being a work good for the matter of it, because it was commanded of God, as you may see, 2 Kings x. 13. Yet he was punished for it, in his posterity, because he did it not in a right manner, Hos. i. 4. " I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." God looks mainly to the heart ; and if so, truly albeit thy outward appearance be fairer than that of many others, yet the hidden man of thy heart is loathsome ; thou lookest well before men, but art thou, as Moses was, *fair to God* ? as the margin hath it, Acts vii. 20. O what a difference is there betwixt the characters of Asa and Amaziah : " The high places were not removed ; nevertheless, Asa his heart was perfect with the Lord all his days," 1 Kings xv. 14, " Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart," 2 Chron. xxv. 2. It may be, thou art zealous against sin in others, and dost admonish them to their duty, and reprove them for their sin ; and they hate thee, because thou dost thy duty : But I must tell thee, God hates thee too, because thou dost it not



in a right manner; and that thou canst never do, while thou art not born again. *Lastly*, All thy struggles against sin in thine own heart and life, are naught. The proud Pharisee afflicted his body with fasting, and God struck his soul, in the mean time, with a sentence of condemnation, Luke xviii. Balaam struggled with his covetous temper to that degree, that though he loved the wages of unrighteousness, yet he would not win them by cursing Israel: but he died the death of the wicked, Numb. xxxi. 8. All thou dost, while in an unregenerate state, is for thyself; and, therefore, it will fare with thee as with a subject who, have reduced the rebels, put the crown on his own head; and, therefore, loseth all his good service, and his head too.

*Object.* If it be thus with us, then we need never perform any religious duty at all.—*Ans.* The conclusion is not just. No inability of thine can loose thee from the duty God's law lays on thee; and there is less evil in thy doing thy duty, than there is in the omitting of it. But there is a mids betwixt omitting of duty, and the doing of it as thou dost it. A man ordereth masons to build a house; if they quite neglect the work, that will not be accepted: if they fall on, and build upon the old rotten foundation, neither will that please, but they must raze the old foundation, and build on firm ground: Go thou and do likewise. In the mean time, it is not in vain for thee, even for thee, to seek the Lord; for though he regards thee not, yet ye may have respect to his own ordinance, and do thee good thereby, as was said before.

*Secondly*, Without regeneration there is no communion with God. There is a society on earth, whose fellowship is with the Father and with the Son Jesus Christ, 1 John i. 3. But out of that society all the unregenerate are excluded; for they are all enemies to God as ye heard before at large. Now, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos iii. 3. They are all unhol and, "What communion hath light with darkness—Christ with Belial?" 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. They may have a show and semblance of holiness; but they are strangers to true holiness; and, therefore, without God in the work. How sad is this case, to be employed in religious duties, but to have no fellowship with God in them. Ye would not be content with your meat, unless it fed you

nor with your clothes, unless they kept you warm : And how can you satisfy yourselves with your duties, while they are not effectual to your communion with God ?

*Thirdly*, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to qualify you for heaven. None go to heaven but they that are made meet for it, Col. i. 12. As it was with Solomon's temple, 1 Kings vi. 7. so it is with the temple above. It is built of stone, made ready before it is brought thither ; namely, of lively stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. wrought for the same thing, 2 Cor. v. 5. for they cannot be laid in that glorious building, just as they came out of the quarry of depraved nature: Jewels of gold are not meet for swine, and far less Jewels of glory for unrenewed sinners. Beggars in their rags are not meet for Kings houses ; nor sinners to enter into the King's palace, without the raiment of needle-work, Psal. xlv. 14, 15. What wise man would bring fishes out of the water to feed in his meadow ; or send his oxen to feed in the sea ? Even as little are the unregenerate meet for heaven, or is heaven meet for them. It would never be liked by them.

The unregenerate would find fault with heaven on several accounts. As, (1.) That it is a strange country. Heaven is the renewed man's native country ; his Father is in heaven ; his mother is Jerusalem, which is above, Gal. iv. 26. He is born from above, John iii. 3. Heaven is his home, 2 Cor. v. 1. Therefore, he looks on himself as a stranger on this earth, and his head is homeward, Heb. vi. 16. " They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." But the unregenerate man is the man of the earth, Psal. x. 18. written in the earth, Jer. xvii. 13. Now, home is home, be it never so homely ; therefore, he minds earthly things, Philip. iii. 19. There is a peculiar sweetness in our native soil, and hardly are men drawn to leave it, and dwell in a strange country. In no case does that prevail more than in this ; for unrenewed men would quit their pretensions to heaven, were it not that they see they cannot make a better of it. (2.) there is nothing there of what they delight most in, as most agreeable to the carnal heart, Rev. xxi. 27. " And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth." When Mahomet gave out paradise to be a place of sensual delights, his religion was greedily embraced ; for that is the heaven men natu-

rally chuse. If the covetous man could get bags full of gold there, and the voluptuous man can promise himself his sensual delights there; they might be reconciled to heaven, and meet for it too: But since it is not so, though they may utter fair words about it, truly it has little of their hearts. (3.) Every corner there is filled with that which, of all things, they have the least liking to; and that is holiness, true holiness, perfect holiness. Were one that abhors swine's flesh bidden to a feast, where all the dishes were of that sort of meat, but variously prepared; he would find fault with every dish at the table, notwithstanding all the art used to make them palatable. It is true, there is joy in heaven, but it is holy joy; there are pleasures in heaven, but they are holy pleasures; there are places to stand by in heaven, but it is holy ground. That holiness that casts up in every place, and in every thing there, would mar all to the unregenerate. (4.) Were they carried thither, they would not only change their place, which would be a great heart-break to them; but they would change their company too. Truly they would never like the company there, who care not for communion with God here; nor value the fellowship of his people, at least in the vitals of practical godliness. Many indeed mix themselves with the godly on earth, to procure a name to themselves, and to cover the naughtiness of their hearts; but that trade could not be managed there. (5.) They would never like the employment of heaven, they care so little for it now. The business of the saints there would be an intolerable burden to them, seeing it is not agreeable to their nature. To be taken up in beholding, admiring, and praising of him that sitteth upon the throne, and of the Lamb, would be work unsuitable; and, therefore, unsavoury to an unregenerate soul. *Lastly*, They would find this fault with it, that the whole is of everlasting continuance. This would be a killing ingredient in it to them. How would such as now account the Sabbath-day a burden, brook the celebrating of an everlasting Sabbath in the heavens?

*Lastly*, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to your being admitted into heaven, John iii. 3. No heaven without it. Though carnal men could digest all these things, which make heaven so unsuitable for them, yet God will never suffer them to come thither: Therefore, born again ye must

be, else ye shall never see heaven; ye shall perish eternally. For, (1.) There is a bill of exclusion against you in the court of heaven, and against all your sort; "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," 1 John iii. 3. Here is a bar before you, that men and angels cannot remove. And to hope for heaven, over the belly of this peremptory sentence, it is to hope God will recall his word, and sacrifice his truth and faithfulness to your safety; which is infinitely more than to hope the earth shall be forsaken for you, and the rock removed out of his place. (2.) There is no holiness without regeneration. It is the new man, which is created in true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. And no heaven without holiness; for, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 4. Will the gates of pearl be opened, to let in dogs and wine? No; their place is without, Rev. xxii. 15. God will not admit such into the holy place of communion with him here; and will he admit them into the holiest of all hereafter? Will he take the children of the devil, and give them to sit with him in his throne? Or will he bring the unclean into the city, whose street is pure gold? Be not deceived, grace and glory are but two links of one chain, which God has joined, and no man shall put ainder. None are transplanted into the paradise above, but out of the nursery of grace below. If ye be unholy while in this world, ye will be for ever miserable in the world to come. (3.) All the unregenerate are without Christ; and, therefore, having no hope while in that case, Eph. ii. 12. Will Christ prepare mansions of glory for them that refuse to receive him into their hearts? Nay; rather, will he not laugh at their calamity, who now set at nought all his counsel? Prov. i. 25, 26. *Lastly*, There is an infallible connection betwixt a finally unregenerate state and damnation, rising from the nature of the things themselves; and from the decree of heaven, which is fixed and unmoveable as mountains, John iii. 3. Rom. viii. 6. *To be carnally minded is death.* An unregenerate state is hell in the bud. It is eternal destruction in embryo; growing daily, though thou dost not discern it. Death is painted on many a fair face in this life. Depraved nature makes men meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the damned, in utter darkness. (1.) The heart of stone

within thee is a sinking weight ; as a stone naturally goes downward, so the hard stony heart tends downward to the bottomless pit. Ye are hardened against reproof ; though ye are told your danger, yet ye will not see it, ye will not believe it. But remember, that the conscience, its being seared with a hot iron, is a sad presage of everlasting burnings. (2.) Your unfruitfulness under the means of grace fits you for the axe of God's judgments, Matth. iii. 10. " Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." The withered branch is fuel for the fire, John xv. 6. Tremble at this, ye despisers of the gospel ; if ye be not thereby made meet for heaven, ye will be like the barren ground, bearing briars and thorns, nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned, Heb. vi. 8. (3.) The hellish disposition of mind, which discovers themselves in profanity of life, fit the guilty for the regions of horror. A profane life will have a miserable end, " They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. Think on this, ye prayerless persons, ye mockers of religion, ye cursers and swearers, ye unclean and unjust persons, who have not so much as moral honesty to keep you from lying, cheating, and stealing. What sort of a tree think ye it to be, upon which these fruits grow ? Is it a tree of righteousness, which the Lord hath planted ? Or is it not such an one as cumbereth the ground, which God will pluck up for fuel to the fire of his wrath ? (4.) Your being dead in sin makes you meet to be wrapt in flames of brimstone, as a winding sheet ; and to be buried in the bottomless pit, as in a grave. Great was the cry in Egypt, when the first-born in each family was dead ; but are there not many families, where all are dead together ? Nay, many there are, who are twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Sometime, in their life, they have been roused by apprehensions of death, and its consequences ; but now they are so far on in their way to the land of darkness, that they hardly ever have the least glimmering of light from heaven. (5.) The darkness of your minds presageth eternal darkness. O the horrible ignorance some are plagued with ; while others who have got some rays of morning light into their heads, are utterly void of spiritual light in their hearts ! If ye knew your case, ye would cry out, Oh darkness ! darkness ! darkness !

making way for the blackness of darkness for ever ! The face-covering is upon you already, as condemned persons ; so near are ye to everlasting darkness. It is only Jesus Christ who can stop the execution, pull the napkin off the face of the condemned malefactor, and put a pardon in his hand, Isa. xxv. 7. " And he will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people," *i. e.* The face-covering cast over the condemned, as in Haman's case, Esther vii. 8. " As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face." *Lastly*, The chains of darkness ye are bound with in the prison of your depraved state, Isa. lxi. 1. fits you to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. Ah miserable men ! Sometimes their consciences stir within them, and they begin to think of amending their ways. But, alas ! they are in chains, they cannot do it. They are chained by the heart ; their lusts cleave so fast to them, that they cannot, nay, they will not shake them off. Thus you see what affinity there is between an unregenerate state, and the state of the damned, the state of absolute and irretrievable misery : Be convinced then, that ye must be born again ; put a high value on the new birth, and eagerly desire it.

The text tells you, that the word is the seed, whereof the new creature is formed ; therefore, take heed to it and entertain it, for it is your life. Apply yourselves to the reading of the scripture. Ye that cannot read, cause others read it to you. Wait diligently on the preaching of the word, as by divine appointment, the special means of conversion : " For it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21. Wherefore cast not yourselves out of Christ's way ; reject not the means of grace, lest ye be found to judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Attend carefully to the word preached. Hear every sermon, as if you were hearing for eternity ; and take heed the fowls of the air pick not up this seed from you as it is sown. Give thyself wholly to it, 1 Tim. iv. 15. " Receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God," 1 Thess. ii. 13. And hear it with application, looking on it as a message sent from heaven, to you in particular, though not to you only, Rev. iii. 22. " He that hath an ear let him hear, what the Spirit saith unto the

churches." Lay it up in your hearts, meditate, and be not as the unclean beasts, that chew not but by earnest prayer beg the dew of heaven may thy heart, that the seed may spring up there.

More particularly, (1.) Receive the testimony word of God, concerning the misery of an unreg state, the sinfulness thereof, and the absolute necessity of regeneration. (2.) Receive its testimony concerning what a holy and just one he is. (3.) Examine thy heart by it; namely, the thoughts of thy heart, the expressions of thy lips, and the tenor of thy life. Look back to the several periods of thy life, and see thy sins fit precepts of the word; and learn from its threat what thou art liable to, on the account of these things. (4.) View the corruption of thy nature, by the same word of God; as a glass which represents thy ugly face in a lively manner. Were these things rooted in the heart, they might be the seed of thanksgiving and sorrow, on account of thy soul's state, which is necessary to prepare and stir thee up to look after thyself. Fix your thoughts upon him offered to thee in the gospel, as fully suited to thy case; having, by his obedience to the death, perfectly satisfied the justice, and brought in everlasting righteousness. This may be the seed of humiliation, desire, hope, and faith. Put thee on to stretch out the withered hand unto his command.

Let these things sink deeply into your hearts, and prove them diligently. Remember, whatever ye must be born again; else it had been better for ye had never been born. Wherefore, if any of you shall die in an unregenerate state, ye will be inexcusable, having been fairly warned of your hazard.

## HEAD II.

MYSTICAL UNION BETWIXT CHRIST AND BELIEVERS.

— \* —  
JOHN XV. 5.

*I am the Vine, ye are the Branches.*

HAVING spoken of the change, made by regeneration, on all those that shall inherit eternal life, in relation to their natural state, the state of degeneracy; need to speak of the change made upon them, in union with the Lord Jesus Christ, in opposition to their natural relative state, the state of misery. The mystery of the saints' union with Christ is very plainly and fully insisted on, from the beginning of the 12th chapter of this Gospel; which is a part of our Lord's last sermon to his disciples. Sorrow had now filled their hearts; they were apt to say, Alas! what will become of us, when our Master is taken from our head? Who will then instruct us? Who will solve our doubts? Will we be supported under our difficulties and discommodities? How will we be able to live, without our blessed communications with him? Wherefore, our Lord Jesus Christ seasonably teaches them the mystery of union with him, comparing himself to the vine, and them to the branches.

He compares, I say, (1.) himself to a vine-stock: *I am the Vine*. He had been celebrating, with his disciples, the sacrament of his supper, that sign and seal of his saints' union with himself; and had told them, he would bear no more of the fruit of the vine, till he should drink it anew with them in his Father's kingdom: And he shews himself to be the vine, from whence the fruit of their consolation should come. The vine hath more beauty than many other trees, but is exceeding



fruitful ; fitly representing the low condition our Lord was then in, yet bringing many sons to glory. But that which is chiefly aimed at, in his comparing himself to a vine, is to represent himself as the supporter and nourisher of his people, in whom they live, and bring forth fruit. (2.) He compares them to the branches : *Ye are the branches* of that vine. *Ye are the branches*, knit to, and growing on this stock ; drawing all your life and sap from it. It is a beautiful comparison : As if he had said, I am as a vine ; ye are as the branches of that vine. Now there are two sorts of branches, (1.) Natural branches, which at first spring out of the stock : These are the branches that are in the tree, and were never out of it. (2.) There are ingrafted branches, which are branches broken off from the tree that first gave their life ; and put into another to grow upon it. Thus branches come to be on a tree, which originally were not on it. The branches mentioned in the text are of the latter sort ; branches broken off, (as the word, in the original language, denotes,) namely, from the tree that first gave them life. None of the children of men are natural branches of the second Adam, *viz.* Jesus Christ, the true Vine ; they are all the natural branches of the first Adam, that degenerate vine : But the elect are, all of them, sooner or later, broken off from the natural stock, and ingrafted into Christ, the true Vine.

DOCTRINE. They who are in the state of grace are ingrafted in, and united to, the Lord Jesus Christ. They are taken out of their natural stock, cut off from it ; and are now ingrafted into Christ, as the new stock. In handling of this, I shall speak to the mystical union, (1.) More generally. (2.) More particularly.

*A general View of the Mystical Union.*

FIRST, In the general, for understanding the union betwixt the Lord Jesus Christ, and his elect, who believe in him, and on him ;

1. It is a spiritual union. Man and wife, by their marriage-union, become one flesh : Christ and true believers, by this union, become one spirit, 2 Cor vi. 17. As one soul or spirit actuates both the head and the members in the

natural body, so the one Spirit of God dwells in Christ and the Christian ; for, " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. Corporal union is made by contract ; so the stones in a building are united ; but this is an union of another nature. Were it possible we could eat the flesh, and drink the blood of Christ, in a corporal and carnal manner, it would profit nothing, John vi. 63. It was not Mary's bearing him in her womb, but her believing on him, that made her a saint, Luke xi. 27, 28. " A certain woman—said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

2. It is a real union. Such is our weakness in our present state, so much are we immersed in sin, that we are prone to form in our fancy an image of every thing proposed to us ; and as to whatsoever is denied us, we are apt to suspect it to be but a fiction, or what has no reality. But nothing is more real, than what is spiritual ; as approaching nearest to the nature of him who is the fountam of all reality, namely, God himself. We do not see with our eyes, the union betwixt our own soul and body ; neither can we represent it to ourselves truly, by imagination, as we do sensible things ; yet the reality of it is not to be doubted. Faith is no fancy, but the substance of things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1. Neither is the union thereby made betwixt Christ and believers imaginary, but most real, " For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30.

3. It is a most close and intimate union. Believers, regenerate persons, who fiduciously credit him, and rely on him, have put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. If that be not enough, he is in them, John xvii. 23. formed in them, as the child in the mother's belly, Gal. iv. 19. He is the foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 11. They are the lively stones built upon him, 1 Pet. ii. 5. He is the head, and they the body, Eph. i. 22, 23. Nay, he liveth in them, as their very souls in their bodies, Gal. ii. 30. And, what is more than all this, they are one in the Father and the Son, as the Father is in Christ, and Christ in the Father, John xvii. 21. " That they all may be one, as thou,

Father, art in me, and I in thee, they also may be one in us."

4. Though it is not a mere legal union, yet it is an union sustained in law. Christ, as the cautioner, the elect as the principal debtors, are one, in the eye of the law. When the elect had run themselves, with the rest of mankind, in debt to the justice of God, Christ became surety for them, and paid the debt. When they believe on him, they are united to him in a spiritual marriage union; which takes effect so far, that what he did and suffered for them is reckoned, in law, as if they had done and suffered for themselves. Hence they are said to be crucified with Jesus, Gal. ii. 20. Buried with him, Col. ii. 12. Yea, raised up together, (namely, with Christ,) and made to sit together, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6. In which places, saints on earth, of whom the Apostle there speaks, cannot be said to be sitting, but in the way of law-reckoning.

5. It is an indissolvable union: Once in Christ, ever in him. Having taken up his habitation in the heart, he never removes. None can untie this happy knot. Who will dissolve this union? Will he himself do it? No, he will not; we have his word for it; "I will not turn away from them," Jer. xxxii. 40. But perhaps the sinner will do this mischief for himself; no, he shall not; "They shall not depart from me," saith their God. Can devils do it? No unless they be stronger than Christ, and his Father too: "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," saith our Lord, John x. 28. "And none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," ver. 39. But, what say you of death, which parts husband and wife; yea, separates the soul from the body? Will not death do it? No; the Apostle (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) is persuaded, that neither death, for as terrible as it is, nor life, for as desirable as it is, nor devils, those evil angels, nor the devil's persecuting agents, though they be principalities or powers on earth; nor evil things present already lying on us, nor evil things to come on us; nor the height of worldly felicity, nor depth of worldly misery; nor any other creature, good or ill, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. As death separated Christ's soul from his body, but could not separate either his soul or

body from his divine nature ; so though the saints should be separated from their nearest relations in the world, and from all their earthly enjoyments ; yea, though their souls should be separated from their bodies, and their bodies separated in a thousand pieces, their bones scattered, as when one cutteth or cleaveth wood ; yet soul and body, and every piece of the body, the smallest dust of it shall remain united to the Lord Christ ; for even in death, they sleep in Jesus, 1 Thess. iv. 14. And he keepeth all their bones, Psal. xxxiv. 20. Union with Christ is the grace wherein we stand, firm and stable, as mount Zion, which cannot be removed.

*Lastly*, It is a mysterious union. The gospel is a doctrine of mysteries. It discovers to us the substantial union of the three persons in one Godhead, 1 John v. 7. *These three are one* ; the hypostatical union of the divine and human natures, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *God was manifest in the flesh*. And the mystical union, betwixt Christ and believers, is a great mystery also, Eph. v. 32. O what mysteries are here ! the Head in heaven, the members on earth, yet really united ! Christ is the believer, living in him, walking in him, and the believer dwelling in God, putting on the Lord Jesus ; eating his flesh, and drinking his blood ! This makes the saints a mystery to the world ; yea, a mystery to themselves.

SECONDLY, I come now more particularly to speak of this union with, and ingrafting into Jesus Christ. And, (1.) I shall consider the natural stock which the branches are taken out of. (2.) The supernatural stock they are ingrafted into. (3.) What branches are cut off the old stock, and put into the new. (4.) How it is done. And, *lastly*, the benefits flowing from this union and ingrafting.

*If the natural and supernatural Stocks, and the Branches, taken out of the former, and ingrafted into the latter.*

I. Let us take a view of the stock which the branches are taken out of. The two Adams, that is, Adam and Christ, are the two stocks ; for the scripture speaks of these two, as if there had never been more in the world than they, 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. "The first man Adam was

made a living soul ; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.—The first man is of the earth, earthly ; the second man is the Lord from heaven.” And the result there were never any that were not branches of one stock ; all men being either in the one stock or in the other ; for in these two sorts all mankind stands divided, 1. “ As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly ; as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. The first Adam, then, is the natural stock : On this are the branches found growing at first ; which afterwards cut off, and ingrafted into Christ. As for the angels, as they had no relation to the first Adam, they have none to the second.

There are four things to be remembered here, (1.) All mankind (the man Christ excepted) are naturally branches of the first Adam, Rom. v. 12. “ By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men.” (2.) The bond which knit us unto the stock was the covenant of works. Adam being our natural root, was made the moral root also ; bearing all the burden, as representing them in the covenant of works. For, “ By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” Rom. v. 19. Now, there behoved to be a relation betwixt that one man and the many, as a foundation for imputing his sin to them. This relation must arise from the mere natural bond betwixt him and his children ; for so we are related to our immediate parents, whose sins are not thereupon imputed to us. Adam’s sin is. It behoved then to arise from a bond betwixt Adam and us, the bond of a covenant, which could be no other than the covenant of works, when we were united to him as branches to a stock. Hence Christ, though a son of Adam, (Luke iii. 23, 38) is none of these branches ; for seeing he came not of Adam in virtue of the blessing of marriage, which was given before the fall, Gen. i. 28. “ Be fruitful and multiply” but in virtue of a special promise made after the fall, Gen. iii. 15. “ The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” Adam could not represent him in the covenant made before his fall. (3.) As it is impossible for one branch to be in two stocks at once ; so no man can be in the one and the same time, both in the first and second

(4.) Hence it evidently follows, that all who are not ingrafted in Jesus Christ are yet branches of the old stock ; and so partake of the nature of the same. Now, as to the first Adam, our natural stock, consider,

*First*, What a stock he was originally. He was a vine of the Lord's planting, a choice vine, a noble vine, wholly a right seed. There was a consultation of the Trinity at the planting of this vine, Gen. i. 26. "Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness." There was no rottenness at the heart of it. There was sap and juice enough in it, to have nourished all the branches, to bring forth fruit unto God. My meaning is, Adam was made able perfectly to keep the commandments of God, which would have procured eternal life to himself, and to all his posterity ; for seeing all die by Adam's disobedience, all should have had life, by his obedience, if he had stood. Consider,

*Secondly*, What that stock now is : Ah ! most unlike to what it was, when planted by the author and fountain of all good. A blast from hell, and a bite with the venomous teeth of the old serpent, have made it a degenerate stock, a dead stock ; nay, a killing stock.

*3<sup>d</sup>*, It is a degenerate naughty stock. Therefore, the Lord God said to Adam, in that dismal day, *Where art thou ?* Gen. iii. 9. In what condition art thou now ? How art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine, unto me ? Or, *Where wast thou ?* Why not in the place of meeting with me ? Why so long a-coming ? What meaneth this fearful change, this hiding of thyself from me ? Alas ! the stock is degenerate, quite spoiled, become altogether naught, and brings forth wild grapes. Converse with the devil is preferred to communion with God. Satan is believed, and God, who is truth itself, disbelieved. He who was the friend of God is now in conspiracy against him. Darkness is come into the room of light ; ignorance prevails in the mind, where divine knowledge shone ; the will, sometime righteous or regular, is now turned rebel against its Lord ; and the whole man is in dreadful disorder.

Before I go further, let me stop and observe, Here is a mirror both for saints and sinners. Sinners, stand here and consider what you are ; and saints, learn ye what once ye were. Ye sinners are branches of a degenerate stock.

Fruit you may bear indeed ; but now that your vine is the vine of Sodom, your grapes must of course be grapes of gall, Deut. xxxii. 32. The scripture speaks of two sorts of fruit, which grow on the branches upon the natural stock ; and it is plain enough, they are of the nature of their degenerate stock. (1.) The wild grapes of wickedness, Isa. v. 2. These grow in abundance by influence from hell : See Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. At their gates are a manner of these fruits, both new and old. Storms come from heaven to put them back ; but they still grow. They are struck at with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God ; conscience gives them many a secret blow ; yet they thrive. (2.) Fruit to themselves, Hosea x. 1. What else are all the unrenewed man's acts of obedience, his reformation, sober deportment, his prayers, and good works ? They are all done chiefly for himself, not for the glory of God. These fruits are like the apples of Sodom, fair to look at, but fall to ashes, when handled and tried. Ye think ye have not only the leaves of a profession, but the fruits of a holy practice too ; but if ye be not broken off from the old stock, and ingrafted in Christ Jesus, God accepts not, nor regards your fruits.

Here I must take occasion to tell you, there are five faults will be found in heaven with your best fruits. (1.) Their bitterness ; your clusters are bitter, Deut. xxxii. 32. There is a spirit of bitterness, wherewith some come before the Lord, in religious duties, living in malice and envy ; and which some professors entertain against others, because they outshine them, by holiness of life, or because they are not of their opinion or way. This, wheresoever it reigns, is a fearful symptom of an unregenerate state. But I do not so much mean this, as that which is common to all the branches of the old stock ; namely, the leaven of hypocrisy, Luke xii. 1. which sours and embitters every duty they perform. The wisdom that is full of good fruits is without hypocrisy, James iii. 17. (2.) Their ill savour. Their works are abominable, for themselves are corrupt, Psal. xiv. 1. They all savour of the old stock, not of the new ; it is the peculiar privilege of the saints, that they are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, 2 Cor. ii. 15. The unregenerate man's fruits savour not of love to Christ, nor of the blood of Christ, nor of the incense of his intercession ;

and therefore will never be accepted of in heaven. (3.) Their unripeness. Their grape is an unripe grape, Job xv. 33. There is no influence on them from the Sun of righteousness, to bring them to perfection; they have the shape of fruit, but no more. The matter of duty is in them; but they want right principles and ends; their works are not wrought in God, John iii. 21. Their prayers drop from their lips, before their hearts be impregnated with the vital sap of the Spirit of supplication; their tears fall from their eyes, ere their hearts be truly softened; their feet turn to new paths, and their way is altered, while yet their nature is not changed. (4.) Their lightness. Being weighed in the balances, they are found wanting, Dan. v. 27. For evidence whereof, you may observe, they do not humble the soul, but lift it up in pride. The good fruits of holiness bear down the branches they grow upon, making them to salute the ground, 1 Cor. xv. 13. "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." But the blasted fruits of unrenowned mens performance hang lightly on branches towering up to heaven, Judges xvii. 13. "Now know I, that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." They look indeed so high, that God cannot behold them. *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?* Isa. lviii. 3. The more duties they do, and the better they seem to perform them, the less are they humbled, the more they are lifted up. This disposition of the sinner is the exact reverse of what is to be found in the saint. To men, who neither are in Christ, nor are solicitous to be found in him, their duties are like windy bladders, wherewith they think to swim ashore to Immanuel's land: But these must needs break, and they consequently sink; because they take not Christ for the lifter up of their head, Psalm iii. 5. *Lastly*, They are not all manner of pleasant fruits, Cant. vii. 13. Christ is a King must be served with variety. Where God makes the heart his garden, he plants it as Solomon did his, with trees of all kinds of fruits, Eccles. ii. 5. And accordingly it brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in all goodness, Eph. v. 9. But the ungodly are not so; their obedience is never universal; there is always some one thing or other excepted. In one



word, their fruits are fruits of an ill tree, that cannot be accepted in heaven.

*2dly*, Our natural stock is a dead stock, according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Our root now is rottenness, no marvel the blossom go up as dust. The stroke is gone to the heart; the sap is let out, and the tree is withered. The curse of the first covenant, like a hot thunder-bolt from heaven, has lighted on it, and ruined it. It is cursed now as the fig-tree, Mat. xxi. 19. "Let no fruit grow on thee, henceforth for ever." Now it is good for nothing, but to cumber the ground, and furnish fuel for Tophet.

Let me enlarge a little here also. Every unrenewed man is a branch of a dead stock. When thou seest, O sinner, a dead stock of a tree, exhausted of all its sap, having branches on it in the same condition; look on it as a lively representation of thy soul's state. (1.) Where the stock is dead, the branches must needs be barren. Alas! the barrenness of many professors plainly discovers on what stock they are growing. It is easy to pretend to faith, but shew me thy faith without thy works, if thou canst, James ii. 17. (2.) A dead stock can convey no sap to the branches, to make them bring forth fruit. The covenant of works was the bond of our union with the natural stock, but now it is become weak through the flesh; that is, through the degeneracy and depravity of human nature, Rom. vii. 3. It is strong enough to command, and to bind heavy burdens on the shoulders of those who are not in Christ; but it affords no strength to bear them. The sap, once in the root, is now gone; and the law, like a merciless creditor, apprehends Adam's heirs, saying, Pay what thou owest; when, alas! his effects are riotously spent. (3.) All pains and cost are lost on the tree whose life is gone. In vain do men labour to get fruit on the branches, when there is no sap in the root. *First*, The gardener's pains are lost; ministers lose their labour on the branches of the old stock, while they continue on it. Many sermons are preached to no purpose; because there is no life to give sensation. Sleeping men may be awakened, but the dead cannot be raised without a miracle; even so, the dead sinner must

t of it, till such time as he has recourse to the blood  
rist for pardon, and renew his repentance, yet all  
e trusted to for life and salvation, namely, the  
ousness of Christ, still stands entire, and the cove-  
emains firm. See Rom. vii. 24, 25. and viii. 1.

7, though some men spend their lives in making and  
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last it creates them little or no uneasiness ; yet the  
in whom the good work is carried on, till it be ac-  
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covenants to be as rotten cords, broke at every touch ;  
e terror of God, being thereupon redoubled on his  
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he is obliged to cease from catching hold of such  
ants, and to seek help some other way.

thly, Therefore, the man comes at length to beg at  
t's door for mercy ; but yet he is a proud beggar,  
ng on his personal worth. For, as the Papists have  
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ngage him to take their cause in hand. They cannot  
of coming to the spiritual market, without money in  
hand. They are like persons, who have once had an  
of their own, but are reduced to extreme poverty,  
orced to beg. When they come to beg, they still re-  
ber their former character ; and though they have lost  
substance, yet they retain much of their former spirit ;  
fore, they cannot think they ought to be treated as or-  
y beggars, but deserve a particular regard ; and, if  
e not given them, their spirits rise against him to  
they address themselves for supply. Thus God gives  
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ot up in the pit, according to his deservings ; but all  
s nothing in his eyes. He must be set down at the  
ren's table, otherwise he reckons himself hardly dealt  
and wronged ; for he is not yet brought so low, as  
nk, God may be justified when he speaketh, (against  
and clear from all iniquity, when he judgeth him ac-  
ng to his real demerit, Psal. li. 4. He thinks, per-  
that even before he was enlightened, he was better

death is in the pot ; and all that taste of the pulse or pottage are killed.

Know then, that every natural man is a branch of a killing stock. Our natural root not only gives us not life, but it has a killing power, reaching all the branches thereof. There are four things which the first Adam conveys to all his branches ; and they are abiding in, and lying on, such of them as are not ingrafted to Christ. *First*, A corrupt nature. He sinned, and his nature was thereby corrupted or depraved ; and this corruption is conveyed to all his posterity. He was infected, and the contagion spread itself over all his seed. *Secondly*, Guilt ; that is an obligation to punishment, Rom. v. 21. " By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for all that have sinned." The threatenings of the law, as cords of death are twisted about the branches of the old stock, to draw them over the hedge into the fire. And till they be cut off from this stock by the pruning knife, the sword of vengeance hangs over their heads, to cut them down. *Thirdly*, This killing stock transmits the curse into the branches. The stock as the stock (for I speak not of Adam in his personal and private capacity) being cursed so are the branches, Gal. iii. 10. " For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse." This curse affects the whole man, and all that belongs to him every thing he possesses ; and worketh three ways. (1.) As poison, infecting ; thus their blessings are cursed Mal. ii. 2. Whatever the man enjoys, it can do him no good, but evil, being thus poisoned by the curse. His prosperity in the world destroys him, Prov. i. 32. The ministry of the gospel is a savour of death unto death to him, 2 Cor. ii. 16. His seeming attainments in religion are cursed to him ; his knowledge serves but to puff him up, and his duties to keep him back from Christ. (2.) It worketh as a moth, consuming and wasting by little and little, Hos. v. 12. " Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth." There is a worm at the root, consuming them by degrees. The curse pursued Saul, till it wormed him out of all his enjoyments, and out of the very show he had of religion. Sometimes they decay as the fat of lambs, and melt away as the snow in a sun-shine. (3.)

It acteth as a lion rampant, Hos. v. 14. "I will be unto Ephraim as a lion." The Lord rains on them snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, in such a manner, that they are hurried away with the stream. He searcheth their enjoyments from them in his wrath, pursueth them with terrors, rents their souls from their bodies, and throws the deadened branch into the fire. Thus the curse devours like fire, which none can quench. *Lastly*, This killing stock transmits death to the branches upon it. Adam took the poisonous cup and drank it off; this occasioned death to himself and us. We came into the world spiritually dead, thereby obnoxious to eternal death, and absolutely liable to temporal death. This root is to us like the Scythian river, which, they say, brings forth little bladders every day, out of which come certain small flies, which are bred in the morning, winged at noon, and dead at night; a very lively emblem of our mortal state.

Now, Sirs, is it not absolutely necessary to be broken off from this our natural stock? What will our fair leaves of a profession, or our fruits of duties avail, if we be still branches of the degenerate, dead, and killing stock? But, alas! among the many questions tossed among us, few are taken up about these: Whether am I broken off from the old stock or not? Whether am I ingrafted in Christ or not? Ah! wherefore all this waste? Why is there so much noise about religion amongst many, who can give no good account of their having laid a good foundation, being mere strangers to experimental religion? I fear, if God do not, in mercy, timeously undermine the religion of many of us, and let us see we have none at all; our root will be found rottenness, and our blossom go up as dust, in a dying hour. Therefore let us look to our state, that we be not found fools in our latter end.

II. Let us now view the supernatural stock, in which the branches, cut off from the natural stock, are ingrafted. Jesus Christ is sometimes called *the Branch*, Zech. ii. 8. So he is, in respect of his human nature; being a branch, and the top-branch of the house of David. Sometimes he is called a *Root*, Isa. xi. 10. we have both together, Rev. xxii. 16. "I am the Root, and the Offspring of David:" David's root, as God; and his Offspring, as man. The

text tells, that he is *the Vine*; that is, He, as a Mediator, is the vine-stock, whereof believers are the branches. As the sap comes from the earth into the root and stock, and from thence is diffused into the branches; so by Christ, as Mediator, divine life is conveyed from the fountain, unto those who are united to him by faith, John vi. 57. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Now Christ is Mediator, not as God only, as some have asserted; nor yet as man only, as the Papists generally hold: But he is Mediator, as God-man, Acts xx. 28.—"The church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood." Heb. ix. 14.—"Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself, without spot, to God." The divine and human natures have their distinct actings; yet a joint operation in this, discharging the office of a Mediator. This is illustrated by the similitude of a fiery sword, which at once cuts and burns; cutting it burneth, and burning it cutteth; the steel cuts, and the fire burns. Wherefore Christ, God-man, is the stock, whereof believers are the branches; and they are united to whole Christ. They are united to him in his human nature, as being members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, Eph. v. 30. And they are united to him in his divine nature; for so the Apostle speaks of this union, Col. i. 27. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." And by him they are united to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, 1 John iv. 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Faith, the bond of this union, receives whole Christ, God-man; and so unites us to him as such.

Behold here, O believers, your high privilege! Ye were once branches of a degenerate stock, even as others; but ye are, by grace, become branches of the true Vine, John xv. 1. Ye are cut out of a dead and killing stock, and ingrafted in the last Adam, who was made a quickening Spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Your loss by the first Adam is made up, with great advantage, by your union with the second. Adam, at his best estate, was but a shrub, in comparison with Christ, the tree of life. He was but a servant; Christ is the Son, the Heir, and Lord of all things; the Lord from heaven. It cannot be denied, that grace was shown

in the first covenant; but it is as far exceeded, by the grace of the second covenant, as the twilight is by the light of the mid-day.

III. What branches are taken out of the natural stock, and grafted into this Vine?—*Ans.* These are the elect, and none other. They, and they only, are grafted into Christ; and, consequently, none but they are cut off from the killing stock. For them alone he intercedes, that they may be one in him and his Father, John xvii. 9, 23. Faith, the bond of this union, is given to none else; it is the faith of God's elect, Tit. i. 1. The Lord passeth by many branches growing on the natural stock, and cuts off only here one, and there one, and grafts them into the true Vine, according as free love hath determined. Oft does he pitch upon the most unlikely branch, leaving the top-boughs; passing by the mighty, and the noble, and calling the weak, base, and despised, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Yea, he often leaves the fair and smooth, and takes the rugged and knotty. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed," &c. 1 Cor. vi. 11. If ye inquire why so? We find no other reason but because they were chosen in him, Eph. i. 4. "Predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ," ver. 5. Thus are they gathered together in Christ, while the rest are left growing on their natural stock, to be afterwards bound up in bundles for the fire. Wherefore, to whomsoever the gospel may come in vain, it will have a blessed effect on God's elect, Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." Where the Lord has much people, the gospel will have much success, sooner or later. Such as are to be saved will be added to the mystical body of Christ.

*How the Branches are taken out of the Natural Stock, and ingrafted into the Supernatural Stock.*

IV. I am to shew how the branches are cut off from the natural stock, the first Adam, and grafted into the true Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks to the Husbandman, not to the branch, that it is cut off from its natural stock, and ingrafted into a new one. The sinner, in his coming off from the first stock, is passive; and neither can nor will come off from it of its own accord, but clings to it, till Almighty power make him to fall off, John vi. 44. "No

he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Believers, by virtue of their union with Christ, are the object of God's special care and providence. Mystical Christ is God's vine; other societies in the world are but wild olive-trees. The men of the world are but God's out-field; the saints are his vineyard, which he has a special propriety in, and a special concern for, Cant. viii. 12. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me." He that slumbers not, nor sleeps, is the keeper of it; he doth keep it, lest any hurt; he will keep it night and day: He in whose hand is the dew of heaven will water it every moment, Isa. xxvii. 3. He dresseth and purgeth it, in order to further fruitfulness, John xv. 2. He cuts off the luxuriant twigs, that mar the fruitfulness of the branch. This is done, especially, by the word, and by the cross of afflictions. The saints need the ministry of the word, as much as the vineyard needeth one to dress and prune the vines, 1 Cor. iii. 9. "We are labourers together with God.—Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." And they need the cross too, 1 Pet. i. 6.

And, therefore, if we should reckon the cross amongst the benefits flowing to believers from their union with Christ, I judge, we should not reckon it amiss. Sure I am, in their sufferings, they suffer with him, Rom. viii. 17. And the assurances they have of the cross have rather the nature of a promise, as of a threatening, Psal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33. "If his children forsake my law,—then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him; nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." This looks like a tutor's engaging to a dying father, to take care of the children left upon him; and to give them both nurture and admonition, for their good. The covenant of grace does truly beat the spears of affliction into pruning hooks to them that are in Christ, Isa. xxvii. 9. "By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin." Why then should we be angry with our cross? Why should we be frightened at it? The believer must take up his cross, and follow his leader, the Lord Jesus Christ. He must take up his *ilk-day's* cross, Luke ix. 23. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily." Yea, he must take up his holy day's cross too, Lam. ii. 22. "Thou hast

by the name of her Head and Husband, 1 Cor. xii. 12. "For as the body is one, and hath many members,—so also is Christ."

Use. From what is said, we may draw these following *Inferences*.

1. The preaching of the law is most necessary. He that would ingraft must needs use the snedding knife. Sinners have many shifts to keep them from Christ; many things by which they keep their hold of the natural stock; therefore, they have need to be closely pursued, and hunted out of their sculking holes, and refuge of lies.

2. Yet, it is the gospel that crowns the work; the law makes nothing perfect. The law lays open the wound, but it is the gospel that heals. The law strips a man, wounds him, and leaves him half dead: The gospel binds up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil, to heal them. By the law we are broken off; but, it is by the gospel we are taken up, and implanted in Christ.

3. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. We are told of a monster in nature, having two bodies differently animated, as appeared from contrary affections at one and the same time; but so suited, that they were served with the self-same legs. Even so, however men may cleave to Christ, call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel, Isa. xlvii. 2. and they may be bound up as branches in him, John xv. 2. by the outward ties of sacraments; yet, if the Spirit that dwells in Christ dwell not in them, they are not one with him. There is a great difference betwixt adhesion and ingrafting. The ivy clasps and twists itself about the oak, but it is not one with it, for it still grows on its own root; so, to allude to Isaiah iv. 1. many professors take hold of Christ, and eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel, only they are called by his name. They stay themselves upon him, but grow upon their own root; they take him to support their hopes, but their delights are elsewhere.

4. The union betwixt Christ and his mystical members is firm and indissoluble. Were it so that the believer only apprehended Christ, but Christ apprehended not him; he could promise little on the stability of such an union; it might quickly be dissolved: But as the believer appre-



saints are in thy hand, Deut. xxxiii. 3. It is observed, that the word *Abba* is the same, whether you go forward or backward. Whatever the believer's case the Lord is still to him, *Abba, Father*.

*Lastly*, They have an unsure hold of Christ, who has not apprehended by his Spirit. There are many marriages here, where the soul apprehends Christ not apprehended of him. Hence many fall away, and never rise again; they let go their hold of Christ; and that is gone, all is gone. These are the branches in that bear not fruit, which the husbandman taketh John xv. 2.—*Quest.* How can that be?—*Ans.* branches are set in the stock, by a profession, or sound-hypocritical faith; they are bound up with the external use of the sacraments; but the stock and are never knit; therefore, they cannot bear fruit they need not be cut off, nor broken off; they are husbandman only taken away, or (as the word properly signifies) lifted up; and so taken away, because there is nothing to hold them: They are indeed bound up to the stock; but they have never united with it.

*Quest.* How shall I know if I am apprehended of Christ?—*Ans.* You may be satisfied in this inquiry, if you order and apply these two things:

*First.* When Christ apprehends a man by his

ly, to the mountain of the Lord's house. It denotes only the abundance of converts, but the disposition of our souls, in coming to Christ; they come heartily and freely, as drawn with loving kindness, Jer. xxxi. 3. "My people shall be willing in the day of thy power," cx. 3. i. e. free, ready, open hearted, giving themselves to thee as free-will offerings. When the bride has the bride's heart, it is a right marriage; but give their hand to Christ, who give him not their hearts. They that are only driven to Christ by terror, surely leave him again, when that terror is gone. Fear may break a heart of stone, but the pieces into which it is broken still continue to be stone; the terrors do not soften it into a heart of flesh. Yet terror may be the work, which love crowns; the strong wind, the earthquake, and the fire going before; the still small voice, in which the Lord is, may come after them. When the blessed Jesus is seeking sinners to match with them, if they are bold and perverse, they will not speak with him till he hath wounded them, made them captives, and bound them with the cords of death. When this is done, it is he makes love to them, and wins their hearts. The Lord says, Hos. ii. 16—20. that his chosen Israel be married unto himself. But, how will the bride's heart be won? Why, in the first place, he will bring her into the wilderness, as he did the people when he brought them out of Egypt, ver. 14. There she will be sorely dealt with, scorched with thirst, and bitten with serpents; and then he will speak comfortably to her, or, in other expression is, he will speak upon her heart. The heart is first driven, and then drawn to Christ. It is the soul as with Noah's dove; she was forced back to the ark, because she could find nothing else to rest upon; but when she did return, she would have remained on the outside of it, if Noah had not put forth his hand and pulled her in, Gen. viii. 9. The Lord sends the avenger of blood in pursuit of the criminal, and he, with a sad heart, leaves his own city; and with tears in his eyes, parts with his old acquaintance, because he dare not stay with them; and he flees for his life to the city of refuge. This is not at all his choice, it is forced upon him; necessity has no law. But when he comes to the

gates, and sees the beauty of the place, the excellent loveliness of it charms him ; and then he enters heart and good-will, saying, *This is my rest, and he I stay* ; and, as one said in another case, I had perished unless I had perished.

*Secondly*, When Christ apprehends a soul, the soul is disengaged from, and turned against sin. As in cutting off the branch from the old stock, the great idol brought down, the man is powerfully taught to deny self ; so, in the apprehending of the sinner by his union, that union is dissolved, which was betwixt the man and his lusts, while he was in the flesh, as the Apostle presses it, Rom. viii. 5. the heart is loosed from the body, though formerly as dear to him, as the members of his body, as his eyes, legs, and arms ; and, instead of pleasure in them, as sometime he did, he longs to be free of them. When the Lord Jesus comes to a soul, the day of converting grace, he finds it like Jerusalem the day of her nativity, (Ezek. xvi. 4.) with its navel drawing its fulsome nourishment and satisfaction from its lusts ; but, he cuts off this communication, that he may set the soul on the breasts of his own consolation, and give it rest in himself. And thus the Lord wounds the head and heart of sin, and the soul comes to him, and says, " Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and wherein there are no profit," Jer. xvi. 19.

*Of the Benefits flowing to true Believers, from their union with Christ.*

V. And, *lastly*, I come to speak of the benefits flowing to true believers, from their union with Christ. The chief of the particular benefits believers have by union, is justification, peace, adoption, sanctification, growth in grace, fruitfulness in good works, acceptance of good works, establishment in a state of grace, and a special conduct of Providence about them. Union with Christ, it is such a benefit, as being the immediate consequent of union with him, comprehends all the rest as mediate ones. For look, as the branch immediately upon its union with the stock, hath communion with the stock, in all that is in it ; so the be-

uniting with Christ, hath communion with him ; in which he launcheth forth into an ocean of happiness, is led into a paradise of pleasures, and has a saving interest in the treasure hid in the field of the gospel, the unsearchable riches of Christ. As soon as the believer is united to Christ, Christ himself, in whom all fulness dwells, is his, Cant. ii. 16. " My beloved is mine, and I am his." And, " How shall he not with him freely give us ALL things ?" Rom. vii. 32. " Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, ALL are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. Thus communion with Christ is the great comprehensive blessing, necessarily flowing from our union with him. Let us now consider the particular benefits flowing from it, before mentioned.

The *first* particular benefit, that a sinner hath by his union with Christ, is Justification ; for being united to Christ, he hath communion with him in his righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. " But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness." He stands no more condemned, but justified before God, as being in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. " There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The branches hereof are pardon of sin, and personal acceptance.

1st, His sins are pardoned, the guilt of them is removed. The bond obliging him to pay his debt is cancelled. God the Father takes the pen, dips it in the blood of his Son, crosseth the sinner's accounts, and blotteth them out of his debt-book. The sinner, out of Christ, is bound over to the wrath of God ; he is under an obligation in law to go to the prison of hell, and there lie till he has paid the utmost farthing. This ariseth from the terrible sanction with which the law is fenced, which is no less than death, Gen. ii. 17. So that the sinner, passing the bounds assigned him, is as Shimei in another case, a man of death, 1 Kings ii. 42. But now being united to Christ, God saith, " Deliver him from going down to the pit ; I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii. 24. The sentence of condemnation is reversed, the believer is absolved, and set beyond the reach of the condemning law. His sins, which sometimes were set before the Lord, Psalms

they do not sink ? He will cast them in with for that they shall go to the ground, and sink as lead in the mighty waters of the Redeemer's blood. They are only forgiven, but forgotten, Jer. xxxi. 34. "I will give their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." And though their after-sins do in themselves serve eternal wrath, and do actually make them liable to temporal strokes, and fatherly chastisements, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, Psalm lxxxix. 3. Yet they can never be actually liable to eternal wrath, or the curse of the law ; for they are dead to the law, Christ, Rom. vii. 4. And they can never fall from union with Christ, nor can they be in Christ, and under condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ. This is an inference drawn from that doctrine of the believer's being dead to the law, delivered by the Apostle in chap. vii. 1—6. as is clear from chap. viii. 2, 3, 4. In this respect, the justified man is the blessed man, whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, Psal. xxxii. one who has no design to charge a debt on another, and is not down in his count-book.

2dly, The believer is accepted as righteous in the sight, 2 Cor. v. 21. For he is found in Christ, not in his own righteousness, but that which is throu

if justice demand a righteousness of one that is in Christ, upon which he may be accounted righteous before the Lord; *Surely shall suchan one say, In the Lord have I righteousness,* Isa. xiv. 24. The law is fulfilled, its commands are obeyed, its sanction is satisfied. The believer's Cautioner has paid the debt. It was exacted, and he answered for it.

Thus the person united to Christ is justified. You may conceive of the whole proceeding herein in this manner. The avenger of blood pursuing the criminal, Christ, as the Saviour of lost sinners, doth by the Spirit apprehend him, and draw him to himself; and he by faith lays hold on Christ; so the Lord our righteousness and the unrighteous creature unite. From this union with Christ results a communion with him, in his unsearchable riches, and, consequently, in his righteousness, that white raiment which he has for clothing of the naked, Rev. iii. 18. Thus the righteousness of Christ becomes his; and because it is his by unquestionable title, it is imputed to him; it is reckoned his, in the judgment of God, which is always according to truth of the thing. And so the believing sinner having a righteousness which fully answers the demands of the law, he is pardoned and accepted as righteous. See Isa. xlv. 22, 24, 25. Rom. iii. 24. and chap. v. 1. Now he is a free man: Who shall lay any thing to the charge of those whom God justifieth? Can justice lay any thing to their charge? No; for it is satisfied. Can the law? No; for it has got all its demands of them in Jesus Christ, Gal. ii. 26. *I am crucified with Christ.* What can the law require more, after it has wounded their Head; poured in wrath, in full measure, into their soul; and cut off their life, and brought it into the dust of death? In so far as it has done all this to Jesus Christ, who is their Head, Eph. i. 22. their Soul, Acts ii. 25, 27. and their Life? Col. iii. 4. What is become of the sinner's own hand-writing, which would prove the debt upon him? Christ has blotted it out, Col. ii. 14. But, it may be justice may get its eye upon it again: No, *he took it out of the way.* But, O that it had been torn in pieces, may the sinner say: Yea, so it is; the nails that pierced Christ's hands and feet are driven through it, he nailed it. But what if the torn pieces be set together

again? That cannot be, for he nailed it to his cross, and his cross was buried with him; but will never rise more, seeing Christ dieth no more. Where is the face-covering that was upon the condemned man? Christ has destroyed it, Isa. xxv. 7. Where is death, that stood before the sinner with a grim face, and an open mouth, ready to devour him? Christ has swallowed it up in victory, ver. 8. Glory, glory, glory to him, that thus loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood!

The *second* benefit flowing from the same spring of union with Christ, and coming by the way of justification, is Peace; peace with God, and peace of conscience, according to the measure of the sense the justified have of their peace with God, Rom. v. 1. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Chap. xiv. 27. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Whereas God was their enemy before, now he is reconciled to them in Christ; they are in a covenant of peace with him; and as Abraham was, so they are the friends of God. He is well-pleased with them in his beloved Son. His word, which spoke terror to them formerly, now speaks peace, if they rightly take up its language. And there is love in all his dispensations towards them, which makes all work together for their good. Their consciences are purged of that guilt and filthiness that sometimes lay upon them: His conscience-purifying blood streams through their souls, by virtue of their union with him, Heb. ix. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ—purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" The bonds laid on their consciences, by the Spirit of God, acting as the spirit of bondage, are taken off, never more to be laid on by that hand, Rom. vii. 15. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Hereby the conscience is quieted, as soon as the soul becomes conscious of the application of that blood; which falls out sooner or later, according to the measure of faith, and as the only wise God sees meet to time it. Unbelievers may have troubled consciences, which they may get quieted again; but, alas! their consciences become peaceable, ere they become pure; so their peace is but the seed of greater horror and confusion. *Care-*

ness may give ease for a while to a sick conscience ;  
 en neglecting its wounds, they close again of their own  
 cord, before the filthy matter is purged out. Many  
 ry their guilt in the grave of an ill memory ; conscience  
 arts a little ; at length the man forgets his sin, and  
 ere is an end of it : But that is only an ease before  
 ath. Business, or the affairs of life, often give ease in  
 a case. When Cain is banished from the presence of  
 : Lord, he falls a-building of cities. When the evil  
 rit came upon Saul, he calls not for his Bible, nor for  
 : priests to converse with him about his case ; but for  
 sic, to play it away. So many when their consciences be-  
 n to be uneasy, they fill their heads and hands with busi-  
 ss, to divert themselves, and to regain ease at any rate.  
 a, some will sin, over the belly of their convictions ;  
 l so some get ease to their consciences, as Hazael gave  
 his master, by stifling him. Again, the performing  
 duties may give some ease to a disquieted conscience ;  
 d this is all that legal professors have recourse to, for  
 ieting of their consciences. When conscience is wound-  
 , they will pray, confess, mourn, and resolve to do  
 no more ; and so they become whole again, with-  
 t any application of the blood of Christ by faith. But  
 ey, whose consciences are rightly quieted, come for  
 ace and purging to the blood of sprinkling. Sin is a  
 eet morsel, that makes God's elect sick souls, ere they  
 t it vomited up. It leaves a sting behind it, which,  
 me one time or other, will create them no little pain.  
 Elihu shews us both the case and cure, Job xxxiii.  
 ehold the case one may be in, whom God has thoughts  
 love to ! He darteth convictions into his conscience,  
 d makes them stick so fast, that he cannot rid himself  
 them, ver. 16. " He openeth the ears of men, and  
 aleth their instructions." His very body sickens, ver.  
 1. " He is chastened also, with pain upon his bed ; and  
 e multitude of his bones with strong pain." He loseth  
 s stomach, ver. 20. " His life abhorreth bread, and his  
 ul dainty meat." His body pines away, so that there is  
 thing on him but skin and bone, ver. 21. " His flesh  
 consumed away, that it cannot be seen ; and his bones,  
 at were not seen, stick out." Though he is not pre-  
 red for death, he has no hopes of life, ver. 22. " His



soul draweth near unto the grave, and" (which is the height of his misery) "his life to the destroyers." He is looking every moment, when devils, these destroyers, (Rom. ix. 11.) these murderers, or man-slayers, (John viii. 44.) will come and carry away his soul to hell! O dreadful case! yet there is hope. God designs to keep back his soul from the pit, although he bring him forward to the brink of it, ver. 18. Now, see how the sick man is cured: The physician's art cannot prevail here; the disease lies more inward, than that his medicines can reach it. It is soul-trouble that has brought the body into this disorder; and, therefore, the remedies must be applied to the sick man's soul and conscience. The physician for this case must be a spiritual physician; the remedies must be spiritual; a righteousness, a ransom, or atonement. Upon the application of these, the soul is cured, the conscience is quieted, and the body recovers, ver. 23, 24, 25, 26. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray unto God, and he shall be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy." The proper physician for this patient is a *messenger, an interpreter*, ver. 23. that is, as some expositors, not without ground, understand it, the great Physician Jesus Christ, whom Job had called his Redeemer, chap. xix. 25. He is a *messenger*, the messenger of the covenant of peace, Mal. iii. 1. who comes seasonably to the sick man. He is an *interpreter*, the great interpreter of God's counsels of love to sinners, John i. 28. *One among a thousand*, even the chief among ten thousand, Cant. v. 10. *One chosen out of the people*, Psal. lxxxix. 29. *One to whom the Lord hath given the tongue of the learned*, to speak a word in season to him that is weary, Isa. l. 4, 5, 6. It is he that is with him, by his Spirit, now, to convince him of righteousness; as he was with him before, to convince him of sin and judgment, John xvi. 8. His work now is to shew unto him his uprightness, or his righteousness; *i. e.* the interpreter Christ his righteousness; which is

the only righteousness arising from the paying of a ransom, and upon which a sinner is delivered from going down to the pit, ver. 24. And thus Christ is said to declare God's name, Psal. xxii. 22. and to preach righteousness, Psal. xl. 9. The phrase is remarkable; it is not to shew unto *the man*, but unto *man* his righteousness; which not obscurely intimates, that he is more than a man, who shews, or declareth this righteousness: Compare Amos iv. 13. "He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought." There seems to be in it a sweet allusion to the first declaration of this righteousness unto man, or, as the word is, unto *Adam*, after the fall; while he lay under terror from apprehensions of the wrath of God; which declaration was made by the Messenger, the Interpreter, namely, the eternal Word of the Son of God, called, *The voice of the Lord God*, Gen. iii. 8. and by him appearing, probably, in human shape. Now, while, by his Spirit, he is the Preacher of righteousness to the man, it is supposed the man lays hold on the offered righteousness; whereupon the ransom is applied to him, and he is delivered from going down to the pit; for God hath a ransom for him. This is intimated to him; God saith, *Deliver him*, ver. 24. Hereupon his conscience, being purged by the blood of atonement, is pacified, and sweetly quieted: "He shall pray unto God—and see his face with joy," which before he beheld with horror, ver. 26. That is New Testament language, "Having an High-Priest over the house of God," he shall "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; having his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience," Heb. x. 21, 22. But then, what becomes of the body, the weak and weary flesh? Why, "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth," ver. 25. "Yea, all his bones" (which were chastened with strong pain, ver. 19.) "shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?" Psal. xxxv. 10.

A *third* benefit, flowing from union with Christ, is Adoption. Believers, being united to Christ, become children of God, and members of the family of heaven. By their union with him, who is the Son of God by nature, they become the sons of God by grace, John i. 12. As when

they have the Spirit of adoption, from the Father, the Spirit of his Son, which bring them to God, as sons to a father; to pour out their complaints in his ear, and to seek necessary supply, Gal. iv. 6, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Under all their weakness they have fatherly pity and compassion shewn them, ciii. 13. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Although they were foundlings, found in a desert land; yet now that they belong to the adoption, he keeps them as the apple of the eye, Deut. xxxii. 10. "Whosoever pursue them, thou shalt be their refuge, Prov. xiv. 26. "His children shall have a refuge." In a time of common calamity, the chambers for protection, where they may be hid, and indignation be overpast, Isaiah xxvi. 20. "And he shall be only their refuge for protection, but their portion shall be vision, in that refuge, Psalm cxlii. 5. "Thou art my refuge and my portion, in the land of the living." They are provided for, for eternity, Heb. xi. 16. "He hath prepared for them a city." And what he sees they have need for time, they shall not want, Mat. vi. 31, 32. "I say unto you, thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For all these things the heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of." See also the connection in the following chapter.

heirs of God, who himself is the portion of their inheritance, Psalm. xvi. 5. and joint heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. And because they are the children of the Great King, and young heirs of glory, they have angels for their attendants, who are sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14.

A *fourth* benefit is Sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification." Being united to Christ, they partake of his Spirit which is the Spirit of holiness. There is a fulness of the Spirit in Christ, and it is not like the fulness of a vessel, which only retains what is poured into it ; but it is the fulness of a fountain for diffusion and communication, which is always sending forth its water, and yet is always full. The Spirit of Christ, that spiritual sap which is in the stock, and from thence is communicated to the branches, is the Spirit of grace, Zech. xii. 10. And where the Spirit of grace dwells, there will be found a complication of all graces. Holiness is not one grace only, but all the graces of the Spirit ; it is a constellation of grace ; it is all the graces in their seed and root. And as the sap conveyed from the stock into the branch goes through it, and through every part of it, so the Spirit of God sanctifies the whole man. The poison of sin was diffused through the whole spirit, soul and body of the whole man ; and sanctifying grace pursues it into every corner, 1 Thess. v. 23. Every part of the man is sanctified, though no part is perfectly so. The truth we are sanctified by is not held in the head, as in a prison ; but runs, with its sanctifying influences, through heart and life. There are, indeed, some graces in every believer, which appear as top branches above the rest ; as meekness in Moses, patience in Job ; but seeing there is in every child of God a holy principle going along with the holy law, in all the parts thereof, loving, liking, and approving of it ; as appears from their universal respect to the commands of God ; it is evident they are endued with all the graces of the Spirit ; because, there can be no more in the effect than there was in the cause.

Now, this sanctifying Spirit, whercof believers partake, is unto them, (1.) A Spirit of mortification. "Through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body," Rom. vii.

13. Sin is crucified in them, Gal. v. 24. They are planted together (namely with Christ) in the likeness of his death which was a lingering death, Rom. vi. 5. Sin in the saint though not quite dead, yet is dying. If it were dead, it would be taken down from the cross, and buried out of his sight; but it hangs there as yet, working and struggling under its mortal wounds. Look, as when a tree has got such a stroke as reaches the heart of it, all the leaves and branches thereof begin to fade and decay; so, where the sanctifying Spirit comes, and breaks the power of sin, there is a gradual ceasing from it, and dying to it, in the whole man, so that he no longer lives in the flesh to the lusts of men. He does not make sin his trade and business; it is not his great design to seek himself, and to satisfy his corrupt inclinations; but he is for Immanuel's land, and is walking in the high-way to it, the way which is called The way of holiness; though the wind from hell, that was on his back before, blows now full in his face, makes his travelling uneasy, and often drives him off the high-way (2.) This Spirit is a Spirit of vivification to them; for he is the Spirit of life, and makes them live unto righteousness Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes." Those that have been planted together with Christ, in the likeness of his death, shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, Rom. vi. 5. At Christ's resurrection, when his soul was reunited with his body, every member of that blessed body was enabled again to perform the actions of life; so, the soul being influenced by the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, is enabled more and more to perform all the actions of spiritual life. And as the whole of the law, and not so many scraps of it only, is written on the holy heart; so believers are enabled to transcribe that law in their conversation. And although they cannot write one line of it without blessing yet God, for Christ's sake, accepts of the performances, as the point of sanctification; they being disciples to his own Son and led by his own Spirit.

This sanctifying Spirit, communicated by the Lord Jesus to his members, is the spiritual nourishment that the branches have from the Stock into which they are ingrafted, whereby the life of grace, given them in regeneration, is preserved, continued, and actuated. It is the

ishment whereby the new creature liveth, and is shed up towards perfection. Spiritual life needs fed, and must have supply of nourishment; and we derive the same from Christ, whom the Father has constituted the head of influences to all his members, ii. 19. "And not holding the head, from which the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered," or supplied, &c. "Now, this supply is supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 19. saints feed richly, eating Christ's flesh, and drinking blood, for their spiritual nourishment; yet our Lord self teacheth us, that it is the Spirit that quickeneth that Spirit who dwells in that blessed body, John i. 14. The human nature is united to the divine nature in the person of the Son, and so (like the bowl in ariah's candlestick, Zech. iv.) lies at the fountain as the conveyance of influences, from the fountain to Deity; and receives not the Spirit by measure, but hath a fulness of the Spirit by reason of that personal union. Hence, believers being united to the man Christ, he seven lamps to the bowl, by their seven pipes, (Zech. iv. 2.) his flesh is to them meat indeed, and his blood to drink indeed; for, feeding on that blessed body, (effectually applying Christ to their souls by faith,) they partake more and more of that Spirit, who dwelleth in, to their spiritual nourishment. The holiness of God could never admit of an immediate union with the creature, nor (consequently) an immediate communion with it; yet the creature could not live the life of grace, without communion with the fountain of life: therefore, that the honour of God's holiness, and the redemption of sinners, might jointly be provided for, the third Person of the glorious Trinity took into a personal union with himself a sinless human nature; that so this harmless, and undefiled humanity, might immediately receive a fulness of the Spirit, of which he might communicate to his members by his divine power and efficacy. like as, if there were a tree, having its root in the earth, and its branches reaching to heaven, the vast distance betwixt the root and the branches would not interfere with the communication betwixt the root and the top; even so, the distance betwixt the man Christ,

who is in heaven, and his members who are on earth cannot hinder the communication betwixt them. though the parts of mystical Christ (*viz.* the head and members) are not contiguous, as joined together in the way of a corporal union? The union is not therefore less real and effectual. Yea, our Lord himself sheweth that albeit we should eat his flesh in a corporal and carnal manner, yet it would profit nothing, John vi. "I would not be one whit holier thereby." But the members of Christ on earth are united to their head in heaven by the invisible bond of the self-same Spirit dwelling both; in him as the head, and in them as the members even as the wheels, in Ezekiel's vision, were not contiguous to the living creatures, yet were united to them by an invisible bond of one spirit in both; so that when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up, Ezek. i. 19. "For," saith the Prophet, "the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels," ver. 20.

Hence we may see the difference betwixt true sanctification and that shadow of it, which is to be seen amongst some strict professors of Christianity, who are not true Christians, are not regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, and is of the same kind with what has appeared in many sober Heathens. True sanctification is the fruit of the soul's union with the holy Jesus, the first and immediate receptacle of the sanctifying Spirit; out of his fulness his members do, by virtue of their union with him, receive sanctifying influences. The other is the product of the man's own spirit, which, whatever it may seem or seems to have of the matter of true holiness, yet does not arise from the supernatural principles, nor has the same aims and ends thereof; for, as it comes from self, it runs out into the dead sea of self again; and lies far from the source of true holiness, as nature doth of grace. They who have this bastard holiness, are like common boats who serve themselves with their own oars; wherefore they are ship bound for Immanuel's land and sails by the blow of the divine Spirit. How is it possible there should be true sanctification without Christ? Can there be true sanctification, without partaking of the Spirit of ho-

Can we partake of that Spirit, but by Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life? The falling dew shall as soon make its way through the flinty rock, as influences of grace shall come from God to sinners, any other way but through him whom the Father has constituted the head of influences, Col. i. 19. "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; and chap. ii. 9. "And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Hence see how it comes to pass, that many fall away, from their seeming sanctification, and never recover; it is because they are not branches truly knit to the true Vine. Meanwhile, others recover from their decays, because of their union with the life giving stock, by the quickening Spirit, 1 John ii. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

A fifth benefit is Growth in Grace. "Having nourishment ministered, they increase with the increase of God," Col. ii. 19. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon," Psal. xcii. 12. Grace is of a growing nature; in the way to Zion they go from strength to strength. Though the holy man be at first a little child in grace, yet at length he becomes a young man, a father, 1 John ii. 13. Though he does but creep in the way to heaven sometimes, yet afterwards he walks, he runs, he mounts up with wings as eagles, Isa. xl. 31. If a branch be grafted into a stock never grows, it is a plain evidence of its not having knit with the stock.

But some may perhaps say, If all true Christians be growing ones, what shall be said of those, who, instead of growing, are going back? I answer, *first*, There is a great difference between the Christian's growing simply, and his growing at all times. All true Christians do grow, but I do not say they grow at all times. A tree that has life and nourishment grows to its perfection, yet is not always growing; it grows not in the winter. Christians also have their winters, wherein the influences of grace, necessary for growth, are ceased, Cant. v. 2. *I sleep.* It is by faith the believer derives gracious influence from



faith is not as the hypocrite's, like a pipe laid sho  
fountain, whereby there can be no conveyance ; it  
maintains a bond of union betwixt Christ and the so  
therefore, because Christ lives, the believer shall l  
John xiv. 19. The Lord Jesus puts in his han  
hole of the door, and clears the means of conv  
and then influences for growth flow, and the b  
graces look fresh and green again, Hos. xiv. 7.  
that dwell under his shadow shall return ; they  
vive as the corn, and grow as the vine." In the  
times, the saints have a principle of growth in  
John iii. 9. " His seed remaineth in him." And  
fore, after decays they revive again ; namely, v  
winter is over, and the Sun of righteousness re  
them, with his warm influences. Mud throw  
pool may lie there at ease ; but if it be cast into  
tain, the spring will at length work it out, and r  
as formerly. *Secondly*, Christians may mistak  
growth, and that two ways. (1.) By judging  
case according to their present feeling. They  
themselves, and cannot perceive themselves to b  
ing ; but there is no reason thence to conclude  
not growing, Mark iv. 27. " The seed spr  
grows up, he knoweth not how." Should one fi  
ever so steadfastly on the sun running his race.


y the advances of the top only, not of the root. Though man be not growing taller, he may be growing stronger. If a tree be taking with the ground, fixing itself in the earth, and spreading out its roots, it is certainly growing, although it be nothing taller than formerly. So, albeit Christian may want the sweet consolation and flashes of affection, which sometimes he has had, yet if he be growing in humility, self-denial, and sense of needy dependence on Jesus Christ, he is a growing Christian, Hos. iv. 5. "I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall cast forth his roots as Lebanon."

*Quest.* But do hypocrites grow at all? And if so, how shall we distinguish betwixt their growth, and true Christian growth?—*Ans.* To the first part of the question, Hypocrites do grow. The tares have their growth as well as the wheat: And the seed that fell among thorns did spring up, Luke viii. 7. only it did bring no fruit to perfection, ver. 14. Yea, a true Christian may have a false growth. James and John seemed to grow in the grace of holy zeal, when their spirits grew so hot in the cause of Christ, that they would have fired whole villages, for not receiving their Lord and Master, Luke ix. 54. "They said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, to consume them, even as Elias did?" But it was indeed no such thing; and, therefore, he turned and rebuked them, ver. 55. and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." To the second part of the question it is answered, That there is a peculiar beauty in true Christian growth, distinguishing it from all false growth: It is universal, regular, proportionable. It is a "growing up to him in all things, who is the head," Eph. iv. 15. The growing Christian grows proportionably in all the parts of the new man. Under the kindly influences of the Sun of righteousness, believers grow up as calves in the stall, Mal. iv. 2. Ye could think it a monstrous growth in these creatures, ye saw their heads grow, and not their bodies; or if ye saw one leg grow, and another not; or if all the parts do not grow proportionably. Ay, but such is the growth of many in religion. They grow like rickety children who have a big head, but a slender body; they get more knowledge into their heads, but no more holiness into

their hearts and lives : They grow very hot outwardly, but very cold inwardly ; like men in a fit of the ague. They are more taken up about the externals of religion than formerly ; yet as great strangers to the power of godliness as ever. If a garden is watered with the hand, some of the plants will readily get much, some little, and some no water at all ; and, therefore, some wither, while others are coming forward : But after a shower from the clouds, all come forward together. In like manner, all the graces of the Spirit grow proportionably, by the special influences of divine grace. The branches ingrafted in Christ, growing aright, do grow in all the several ways of growth at once. They grow inward, growing into Christ, growing aright, do grow in all the several ways of growth at once. They grow inward, growing into Christ, Eph. iv. 15. uniting more closely with him ; and cleaving more firmly to him, as the head of influences, which is the spring of all other true Christian growth. They grow outward, in good works in their life and conversation. They not only, with Naphtali, *give goodly words* ; but, like Joseph, they are *fruitful boughs*. They grow upward in heavenly-mindedness, and contempt of the world ; for their conversation is in heaven, Philip. iii. 20. And, finally, they grow downward in humility and self-loathing. The branches of the largest growth in Christ are, in their own eyes, less than the least of all saints, Eph. iii. 8. The chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. More brutish than any man, Prov. xxx. 2. They see they can do nothing, no, not so much as to think any thing, as of themselves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. that they deserve nothing, being not worthy of the least of all the mercies shewed unto them, Genesis xxxii. 10. and that they are nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 2.

A *sixth* benefit is Fruitfulness. The branch ingrafted into Christ is not barren, but brings forth fruit, John xv. 5. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." For that very end are souls married to Christ, that they may bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4. They may be branches in Christ by profession, but not by real implantation, that are barren branches. Whosoever are united to Christ bring forth the fruits of gospel obedience and true holiness. Faith is always followed with

od works. The believer is not only come out of the  
 ave of his natural state, but he has put off his grave-  
 thes ; namely, reigning lusts, in the which he walked  
 metime like a ghost, being dead while he lived in them,  
 l. iii. 7, 8. For Christ has said of him, as of Lazarus,  
*raise him, and let him go.* And now that he has put on  
 rist, he personates him (so to speak) as a beggar, in bor-  
 wed robes, represents a king on the stage, walking as he  
 o walked. Now, the fruit of the Spirit in him is in all  
 odness, Eph. v. 9. The fruits of holiness will be found  
 the hearts, lips, and lives of those who are united to  
 rist. The hidden man of the heart is not only a temple  
 ilt for God, and consecrated to him, but used and em-  
 oyed for him ; where love, fear, trust, and all the other  
 rts of unseen religion, are exercised, Philip. iii. 3. " For  
 : are of the circumcision, which worship God in the  
 irit." The heart is no more the devil's common, where  
 oughts go free ; for there even vain thoughts are hated,  
 alm cxix. 123. But it is God's inclosure, hedged about  
 a garden for him, Cant. iv. 16. It is true, there are  
 eds of corruption there, because the ground is not yet  
 rectly healed : But the man, in the day of his new crea-  
 n, is set to dress and keep it. A live-coal from the al-  
 r has touched his lips, and they are purified, Psalm xv.  
 2, 3. " Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle ? Who  
 all dwell in thy holy hill ? He that speaketh the truth in  
 s heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor  
 keth up a reproach against his neighbour." There may  
 : indeed a smooth tongue, where there is a false heart.  
 he voice may be Jacob's, while the hands are Esau's.  
 ut, " If any man among you seem to be religious, and  
 idleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that  
 an's religion is vain," James i. 26. The power of godli-  
 ss will rule over the tongue, though a world of iniquity.  
 one be a Galilean, his speech will bewray him ; he will  
 t speak the language of Ashdod, but the language of Ca-  
 an. He will neither be dumb in religion, nor will his  
 gue walk at random ; seeing to the double guard nature  
 th given the tongue, grace hath added a third. The  
 lits of holiness will be found in his outward conversation,  
 he hath clean hands, as well as a pure heart, Psal. xxiv.  
 He is a godly man, and religiously discharges the du-



those fruits are a cluster of vital actions, where Christ is the principle and end: The principle, first in them; and the life which they live is by the first Son of God, Gal. i. 20. The end, for they live and to them to live is Christ, Philip. i. 21. The religion are, in the world, like fatherless children: some will not take them in, because they never know their Father: Some take them in, because they are serviceable to them; but the saints take them in for their Father's sake; that is, for Christ's sake; and they live in their eyes, because they are like him. O! what the new life of the saints? Surely it could never be hammered out of the natural powers of their soul, the united force of all created power. In eternal life, should their womb have been shut up, but that they are united to Christ, they bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 14.

If you ask me, How your nourishment, growth, and fruitfulness, may be forwarded? I offer these few directions: (1.) Make sure work, as to your knitting with the needle of faith unfeigned; and beware of hypocrisy; a bare profession is not sound at the heart will certainly wither. The plants of the Lord's planting are trees of righteousness: So when others fade, they bring forth fruit. Hypocrisy is a disease in the vitals of religion, which will consume you to length. It is a leak in the ship, that will certainly sink you.

ery wind of doctrine. But speaking the truth in  
 y grow up unto him in all things, who is the head,  
 rist." A rolling stone gathers no fog, and a wa-  
 udgment makes a fruitless life. Though a tree be  
 sound, yet how can it grow, or be fruitful, if ye  
 removing it out of one soil into another? (3.) En-  
 to cut off the suckers, as gardeners do, that their  
 y thrive. These are unmortified lusts. Therefore,  
 y your members that are upon the earth," Col. iii.  
 en the Israelites got meat to their lusts, they got  
 to their souls. She that has many hungry children  
 er hand, and must be still putting into their mouths,  
 re much ado to get a bit put into her own. They  
 fuse the craving of inordinate affections, who would  
 ir souls to prosper. *Lastly*, Improve, for these  
 e ordinances of God. The courts of our God are  
 e, where the trees of righteousness flourish, Psalm  
 . The waters of the sanctuary are the means ap-  
 of God, to cause his people grow as willows by  
 er-courses. Therefore, drink in with desire the sin-  
 lk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 Pet.  
 ome to these wells of salvation, not to look at them  
 it to draw water out of them. The sacrament of  
 d's supper is in a special manner appointed for  
 ids. It is not only a solemn public profession, and  
 f our union and communion with Christ, but it is a  
 f most intimate communion with him, and strength-  
 union with him; our faith, love, repentance, and  
 races, 1 Cor. x. 26. "The cup of blessing which  
 s, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?  
 ead which we break, is it not the communion of  
 y of Christ?" And chap. xii. 13. "We have been  
 e to drink into one Spirit." Give yourselves unto  
 open your mouths, and he will fill them. By these  
 he branches in Christ may be further nourished,  
 p, and bring forth much fruit.

*Tenth* benefit is, The acceptance of their fruits of  
 s before the Lord. Though they be very imper-  
 ey are accepted, because they savour of Christ the  
 stock, which the branches grow upon; while the  
 f others are rejected of God, Gen. ii. 4, 5. "And  
 ord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering :

But unto Cain and his offering he had not respect." Compare Heb. xi. 3. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." O how defective are the saints duties in the eye of the law! The believer himself espies many faults in his best performances, yet the Lord graciously receives them. There is no grace planted in the heart, but there is a weed of corruption hard by its side, while the saints are in this lower world. Their very sincerity is not without mixture of dissimulation or hypocrisy, Gal. ii. 13. Hence there are defects in the exercise of every grace, in the performance of every duty; depraved nature always drops something to stain their best works. There is still a mixture of darkness with their clearest light. Yet this does not mar their acceptance, Cant. vi. 10. "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning?" or as the dawning. Behold how Christ's spouse is esteemed and accepted of her Lord, even when she looks forth as the morning, whose beauty is mixed with the blackness of the night! When the morning was looking out, as the word is, Judges xix. 26. *i. e.* in the dawning of the day, as we read it. So the very dawning of grace, and good-will to Christ, grace peeping out from under a mass of darkness in believers, is pleasant and acceptable to him, as the break of day is to the weary traveller. Though the remains of unbelief make their hand of faith to shake and tremble, yet the Lord is so well pleased with it, that he employs it to carry away pardon and supplies of grace, from the throne of grace, and the fountain of grace. His faith was effectual, who cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," Mark ix. 24. Though the remains of sensual affections make the flame of their love weak and smoky he turns his eyes from the smoke and beholds the flame how fair it is, Cant. iv. 10. "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!" The smell of their under-garments of inherent holiness, as imperfect as it is, is like the smell of Lebanon, ver. 11. and that because they are covered with their elder brother's clothes, which make the sons of God to smell as a field which the Lord hath blessed. Their good works are accepted; their cups of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not want reward. Though they cannot offer for the tabernacle

gold, silver, and brass, and onyx-stone, let them come forward with what they have ; if it were but goat's hair, it shall not be rejected ; if it be but ram-skins, they shall be kindly accepted, for they are dyed red, dipped by faith in the Mediator's blood, and so presented unto God. A very ordinary work done in faith, and from faith, if it were but the building of a wall about the holy city, is a great work, Neh. vi. 3. If it were but the bestowing of a box of ointment on Christ, it shall never be forgotten, Matth. xxvi. 13. Even a cup of cold water only, given to one of Christ's little ones, in the name of a disciple, shall be rewarded, Matth. x. 42. Nay, not a good word for Christ shall drop from their mouths, but it shall be registered in God's book of remembrance, Mal. iii. 16. Nor shall a tear drop from their eyes for him, but he will put it in his bottle, Psal. lvi. 8. Their will is accepted for the deed ; their sorrow for the want of will, for the will itself, 2 Cor. viii. 12. " For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Their groanings, when they cannot well word their desires, are heard in heaven ; the meaning of these groans is well known there, and they will be returned like the dove with an olive branch of peace in her mouth. See Rom. viii. 26, 27. Their mites are better than other mens talents. Their lisping and broken sentences are more pleasant to their Father in heaven than the most fluent and flourishing speeches of those that are not in Christ. Their voice is sweet, even when they are ashamed it should be heard ; their countenance is comely, even when they blush, and draw a veil over it, Cant. ii. 14. The Mediator takes their petitions, blots out some parts, rectifies others, and then presents them to the Father, in consequence whereof they pass in the court of heaven.

Every true Christian is a temple to God. If ye look for sacrifices, they are not wanting there ; they offer the sacrifice of praise, and they do good ; with such sacrifices God is well pleased, Heb. xiii. 15, 16. Christ himself is the altar that sanctifies the gift, ver. 10. But what comes of the skins and dung of their sacrifices ? They are carried away without the camp. If we look for incense, it is there too. The graces of the Spirit are found in their



An eighth benent nowing from union with the Establishment. The Christian cannot fall away, but persevere unto the end, John x. 28. "They shall perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. Indeed, if a branch do not knit with the stock, it will wither and be cast away when shaking winds arise; but the branch that is knit to the stock stands fast, whatever wind blows. So the Christian is a branch in Christ the true Vine, but their union with him is their security; moved they may be, but they never can be: The Lord will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, 1 Cor. x. 13. There is never of any continuance; there is almost always wind blowing; and, therefore, branches are rare together at rest. But sometimes violent winds arise threaten to rend them from off their stock. Even so it is with saints; they are daily put to it, to keep their feet against temptation; but sometimes the wind fresheneth so high, and bloweth so furiously, that it makes top branches to sweep the ground; yet being knit to Christ their stock, they get up again in spite of the violent efforts of the prince of the power of the air, xiv. 18. "When I said my foot slippeth, thy hand, O Lord, held me up." But the Christian improves this trial; and is so far from being damaged, that

with, One Christian who hath had experience of temptation, is worth a thousand others.

Sometimes a stormy wind of trouble and persecution, from the men of the world, blows upon the vine, *i. e.* mystical Christ; but union with the stock is a sufficient security to the branches. In a time of the church's peace and outward prosperity, while the angels hold the winds that they blow not; there are a great many branches taken up, and put into the stock, which never knit with it, nor live by it, though they be bound up with it, by the bonds of external ordinances. Now these may stand a while on the stock, and stand with great ease while the calm lasts: But when once the storms arise, and the winds blow, they will begin to fall off, one after another; and the higher the wind riseth, the greater will the number be that falls. Yea some strong boughs of that sort, when they fall, will, by their weight, carry others of their own kind quite down to the earth with them, and will bruise and press down some true branches in such a manner, that they would also fall off, were it not for their being knit to the stock; in virtue whereof they get up their heads again, and cannot fall off, because of that fast hold the stock has of them. Then it is that many branches, sometime high and eminent, are found lying on the earth withered, and fit to be gathered up and cast into the fire, Matth. xiii. 6. "And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away." John xv. 6. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." But however violently the winds blow, none of the truly ingrafted branches, that are knit with the stock, are found missing, when the storm is changed into a calm, John xvii. 12. "Those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost." The least twig growing in Christ shall stand it out, and subsist; when the tallest cedars growing on their own root, shall be laid flat on the ground, Rom. viii. 35—39. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" &c. However severely Israel be sifted, yet shall not the least grain, or, as it is in the original language, a little stone fall upon the earth, Amos ix. 9.

Luke vii. 28, 29. (3.) In as much as they are drawn away, loaded with the guilt of all their sins; this winding-sheet, that shall lie down with them in the grave, Job xx. 11. Their works follow them into the other world; they go away with the yoke of their transgressions laid about their necks. Guilt is a bad companion, but how terrible will it be in death! It lies now, like cold brimstone on their benumbed consciences; when death opens the way for sparks of divine vengeance like fire, to fall upon it, it will make dreadful flame. Conscience, in which the soul will be, as it were, for ever. *Lastly*, The wicked are driven away from wickedness, in so far as they die under the absolute restraint of their wickedness. While there is hope, there is restraint on the worst of men; and these moral endowments which God gives to a number of men, for the benefit of mankind in this life, are so many allays and restraints on the impetuous wickedness of human nature. But being cut off, and these gifts withdrawn, the wickedness of the wicked will then arrive at its perfection. As the seed of grace, sown in the hearts of the elect, comes to its maturity at death; so, wicked and hellish dispositions the reprobate, come then to their highest pitch. Prayers to God will then be turned to horrible curses; their praise to hideous blasphemies, Mat. xxii. 13. *shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth.* This gives a true, but genuine view, of the state of the wicked, in the other world.

II. I shall discover the hopelessness of the state of the unregenerated men, at death. It appears to be very hopeless; we consider these four things:

*First*, Death cuts off all their hopes and prospects of peace and pleasure in this life, Luke xii. 19, 20. "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto thee, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast gathered?' They look for great matters in this world; they desire to increase their wealth, to see their families prosper to live at ease; but death comes like a stormy wind, which shakes off all their fond hopes, like green fruit from the tree: "When he is about to fill his belly, God shall

the fury of his wrath upon him," Job xx. 23. He may begin a web of contrivances, for advancing his worldly interest; but, before he gets it wrought out, death comes, and cuts it out: "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish," Psalm cxlvi. 4.

*Secondly,* When death comes, they have no solid grounds to hope for eternal happiness: "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" Job xxvii. 3. Whatever hopes they fondly entertain, they are not founded on God's word, which is the only sure ground of hope: If they knew their own case, they would see themselves only happy in a dream. And, indeed, what hope can they have? The law is plain against them, and condemns them. The curses of it (these cords of death) are about them already. The Saviour, whom they slighted, is now their Judge; and their Judge is their enemy. How then can they hope? They have bolted the door of mercy against themselves, by their unbelief. They have despised the remedy; and, therefore, must die without mercy. They have no saving interest in Jesus Christ, the only channel of conveyance, in which mercy flows; and, therefore, they can never taste of it. The sword of justice guards the door of mercy, so as none can enter in, but the members of the mystical body of Christ, over whose heads is a covert of atoning blood, the Mediator's blood. These, indeed, may pass without harm, for justice has nothing to require of them. But others cannot pass, since they are not in Christ; death comes to them with the sting in it, the sting of unpardoned guilt." It is armed against them with all the force the sanction of a holy law can give it, 1 Cor. xv. 56. "The sting of death is in, and the strength of sin is the law." When that law was given on Sinai, the whole mount quaked greatly, Exod. ix. 18. When the Redeemer was making satisfaction for the elect's breaking of it, the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, Matth. xxvii. 51. What possible ground of hope, then, is there to the wicked man, when death comes upon him, armed with the force of this law? How can he escape that fire, which burned unto the midst of heaven? Deut. vi. 11. How shall he be able to stand in that smoke, that ascended as the smoke of a furnace? Exod. xix. 18. How

will he endure the terrible thunders and lightnings, *ver.* 16. and dwell in the darkness, clouds, and thick darkness *Deut.* iv. 11. All these resemblances, heaped together, do but faintly represent the fearful tempest of wrath and indignation, which shall pursue the wicked to the lowest hell; and for ever abide on them, who are driven to darkness at death.

*Thirdly*, Death roots up their delusive hopes of eternal happiness; then it is, their covenant with death, and agreement with hell, is broken. They are awakened out of their golden dreams, and at length lift up their eyes, *Job* viii. 14. "Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web." They trust all shall be well with them after death; but this their trust is but a web woven out of their own bowels, with a great deal of art and industry. They wrap themselves up in this their hope, as the spider wraps herself in her web. But it is but a weak and slender defence; for however it may withstand the threatenings of the word of God, death, that besom of destruction, will sweep them and it both away, so as there shall not be the least shred of it left them; but he, who this moment will not let his hope go, shall next moment be utterly hopeless. Death overturns the house built on the sand; it leaves no man under the power of delusion.

*Lastly*, Death makes their state absolutely and forever hopeless. Matters cannot be retrieved and amended after death. For, (1.) Time once gone can never be recalled. If cries or tears, price or pains, could bring time back again the wicked man might have hope in his death. But tears of blood will not prevail; nor will his roaring for millions of ages cause it to return. The sun will not stand still, until the sluggard awake and enter on his journey; and when once it is gone down, he needs not expect the night to be turned into day for his sake; he must lodge through the long night of eternity, where his time left him. (2.) There is no returning to this life, to amend what is amiss: It is a state of probation and trial, which terminates at death; and, therefore, we cannot return to it again: It is but once we thus live, and once we die. Death carries the wicked man to his own place, *Acts* i. 25. Thus life is our working-day; and death closeth our day and our work together. We may readily

imagine the wicked might have some hope in their death; if, after death has opened their eyes, they could return to life, and have but the trial of one Sabbath, one offer of Christ, one day, or but one hour more, to make up their peace with God: "But, man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep," Job xiv. 12. *Lastly*, In the other world, men have no access to get their ruined state and condition retrieved, if they never so fain would: "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest," Eccles. ix. 10. Now, a man may flee from the wrath to come; now, he may get into a refuge; but when once death has done its work, the door is shut; there are no more offers of mercy, no more pardons; where the tree is fallen, there it must lie.

Let what has been said be carefully pondered: And, that it may be of use, let me exhort you,

*First*, To take heed that ye entertain no hopes of heaven, but what are built on a solid foundation. Tremble to think what fair hopes of happiness death sweeps away, like cobwebs! How the hopes of many are cut off, when they seem to themselves to be on the very threshold of heaven! How, in the moment they expect to be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, into the regions of bliss and peace, they are carried by devils, into the society of the damned in hell; into the place of torment, and regions of horror! I beseech you to beware, (1.) Of a hope built up, where the ground was never cleared. The wise builder digged deep, Luke vi. 48. Were your hopes of heaven never shaken; but ye have had good hopes all your days? Alas for it! you may see the mystery of your case explained, Luke xi. 21. "When a strong man, armed, keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." But if they have been shaken, take heed lest there have only some branches been made in the old building, which you have got repaired again, by ways and means of your own. I assure you, your hope (howsoever fair a building it is) is not to trust to; unless your old hopes have been razed, and you have built on a foundation quite new. (2.) Beware of that hope, which looks brisk in the dark; but loses all its lustre, when it is set in the light of God's

word ; when it is examined and tried by the touchstone of divine revelation, John iii. 20, 21. " For every one that doth evil, hateth the light ; neither cometh to the light, least his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." That hope, which cannot abide scripture-trial, but sinks, when searched into by sacred truth, is a delusion, and not a true hope ; for God's word is always a friend to the graces of God's Spirit, and an enemy to delusion. (3.) Beware of that hope, which stands without being supported by scripture-evidences. Alas ! many are big with hopes, who cannot give, because they really have not, any scripture-grounds for them. Thou hopest, that all shall be well with thee, after death ; but what word of God is it, on which thou hast been caused to hope ? Psalm cxix. 49. What scripture-evidence hast thou, to prove that thy hope is not the hope of the hypocrite ? What hast thou, after impartial self-examination, as in the sight of God, found in thyself, which the word of God determines to be a sure evidence of his right to eternal life, who is possessed of it ? Numbers of men are ruined with such hopes, as stand unsupported by scripture evidence. Men are fond and tenacious of these hopes ; but death will throw them down, and leave the self-deceiver hopeless. *Lastly*, Beware of that hope of heaven, which doth not prepare and dispose you for heaven, which never makes your soul more holy, 1 John iii. 3. " Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The hope of the most part of men is rather a hope to be free of pain and torment in another life, than a hope of true happiness, the nature whereof is not understood and discerned ; and, therefore, it stakes down in sloth and indolence, and does not excite to mortification and a heavenly life. So far are they from hoping aright for heaven, that they must own, if they speak their genuine sentiments, removing out of this world into any other place whatsoever, is rather their fear than their hope. The glory of the heavenly city does not at all draw their hearts upwards towards it ; nor do they lift up their heads with joy, in the prospect of arriving at it. If they had the true hope of the marriage-day, they would, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, be making

themselves ready for it, Rev. xix. 7. But their hopes are produced by their sloth, and their sloth is nourished by their hopes. Oh ! Sirs, as ye would not be driven away hopeless in your death, beware of these hopes. Raze them now, and build on a new foundation ; lest death leave not one stone of them upon another, and ye never be able to hope any more.

*Secondly*, Hasten, O sinners, out of your wickedness, out of your sinful state, and out of your wicked life ; if ye would not, at death, be driven away in your wickedness. Remember the fatal end of the wicked man, as the text represents it. I know there is a great difference in the death of the wicked, in respect of some circumstances ; but all of them, in their death, agree in this, that they are driven away in their wickedness. Some of them die resolutely, as if they scorned to be afraid. Some in raging despair ; so filled with horror, that they cry out, as if they were already in hell ; others in sullen despondency, oppressed with fears ; insomuch, that their hearts are sunk within them, upon the remembrance of misspent time, and the view they have of eternity ; having neither head nor heart to do any thing for their own relief. And others die stupid ; they lived like beasts, and they die like beasts ; without any concern on their spirits, about their eternal state. They groan, under their bodily distress, but have no sense of the danger of their souls. One may, with almost as much prospect of success, speak to a stone, as speak to them : Vain is the attempt to teach them ; nothing that can be said moves them. To discourse to them, either of the joys of heaven, or the torments of hell, is to plow on a rock, or beat the air. Some die like the foolish virgins, dreaming of heaven ; their foreheads are steeled against the fears of hell, with presumptuous hopes of heaven. Their business, who would be useful to them, is not to answer doubts about the case of their souls ; but to dispute them out of their false hopes. But which way soever the unconverted man dies, he is driven away in his wickedness. O dreadful case ! Oh, let the consideration of so horrible a departure out of this world, move you to betake yourselves to Jesus Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour, an Almighty Redeemer. Let it prevail to drive you out of your wickedness, to holiness of heart and life.



They must indeed go through the valley of the shadow of death, but though it be in itself a dark and shady vale, it shall be a valley of hope to them; they shall not be driven through it, but walk through it, as men in perfect safety, who fear no evil, Psal. xxiii. 4. Why should they fear? They have the Lord of the lands safe conduct, his pass sealed with his own blood, namely, the blessed covenant, which is the saint's death-bed comfort, 2 Sam. xxii. 5. "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting COVENANT, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he cause it not to grow." Who then can harm them? It is a safe riding in Christ's chariot, (Cant. iii. 9.) both through life and death. They have good and honourable attendants, a guard, even a guard of angels. These encamp about them in the time of their life; and surely will not leave them in the day of their death. These happy ministering spirits are attendants on their Lord's bride, and will doubtless convey her safe home to his house. When friends in mournful mood stand by the saint's bedside, waiting to see him draw his last breath; his soul is waited for of holy angels, to be carried by them into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. The Captain of the saint's salvation is the captain of this holy guard; he was their guide even unto death, and he will be their guide through it too. Psal. xxiii. 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." They may without fear pass that river, being confident it shall not overflow them; and may walk through that fire, being sure they shall not be burnt by it.

Death can do them no harm. It cannot even hurt their bodies; though it separate the soul from the body, it cannot separate the body from the Lord Christ. Even death is to them but sleep in Jesus, 1 Thess. iv. 14. They continue members of Christ, though in a grave. Their dust is precious dust, laid up in a grave as in their Lord's cabinet. They lie in a grave mellowing; as precious-fruit laid up to be brought forth to him at the resurrection. The husbandman has corn in his barn, and corn lying in the ground; the latter is more precious to him than the former; because he looks to get it returned with increase. Even so the dead bodies of the saints are valued by their

much ado to keep up hope on a death-bed ; while others pass off quickly, like sheep to the slaughter ; the rather that Satan, who useth all his art to support the hopes of the hypocrite, will do his utmost to mar the peace, and increase the fears of the saint. *Finally*, The bad frame of spirit, and ill condition, in which death sometimes seizeth a true Christian, may cause this perplexity. By his being in the state of grace, he is indeed always habitually prepared for death, and his dying safely is insured ; but there is more requisite to his actual preparation, and dying comfortably ; his spirit must be in good condition too.

Wherefore there are three cases, in which death cannot but be very uncomfortable to a child of God, (1.) If it seize him at a time when the guilt of some particular sin, unrepented of, is lying on his conscience ; and death comes on that very account, to take him out of the land of the living ; as was the case of many of the Corinthian believers, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cause," namely, of unworthy communicating, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." If a person is surprised with the approach of death, while lying under the guilt of some unpardoned sin, it cannot but cause a mighty consternation. (2.) When death catches him napping. The mighty cry must be frightful to sleeping virgins. The man who lies in a ruinous house, and awakens not till the timber begins to crack, and the stones to drop down about his ears, may indeed get out of it safely, but not without fears of being crushed by its fall. When a Christian has been going on in a course of security and backsliding, and awakens not till death comes to his bedside, it is no marvel if he get a fearful awakening. *Lastly*, When he has lost sight of his saving interest in Christ, and cannot produce evidences of his title to heaven. It is hard to meet death without some evidence of a title to eternal life at hand ; hard to go through the dark valley, without the candle of the Lord shining upon the head. It is a terrible adventure to launch out into eternity, when a man can make no better of it, than a leap in the dark, not knowing where he shall light, whether in heaven or hell.

Nevertheless, the state of the saints, in their death, is always in itself hopeful. The presumptuous hopes of the

ungodly, in their death, cannot make their state hopeful; neither can the hopelessness of a saint make his state hopeless: For God judgeth according to the truth of the thing, not according to mens opinions about it. Howbeit the saints can no more be altogether without hope, than they can be altogether without faith. Their faith may be very weak, but it fails not; and their hope very low, yet they will, and do, hope to the end. Even while the godly seem to be carried away with the streams of doubts and fears there remains still as much hope as determines them to lay hold on the tree of life, that grows on the banks of the river. Jonah ii. 4. "Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again towards thy holy temple."

**Use.** This speaks comfort to the godly against the fear of death. A godly man may be called a happy man, before his death: because, whatever befall him in life, he shall certainly be happy at death. You who are in Christ, who are true Christians, have hope in your end; and such hope as may comfort you against all those fears, which arise from the consideration of a dying hour. This I shall branch out, in answering some cases briefly.

**Case 1.** The prospect of death (will some of the saints say) is uneasy to me, not knowing what shall become of my family, when I am gone.—*Ans.* The righteous hath hope in his death, as to his family, as well as to himself. Although you have little for the present to live upon; which has been the case of many of God's chosen ones, 1 Cor. iv. 11. "We *i. e.* the Apostles, both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place." And though you have nothing to leave them, as was the case of that son of the prophet's, who did fear the Lord, and yet died in debt, which he was unable to pay; as his poor widow represents, 2 Kings iv. 1. yet you have a good friend to leave them to; a covenanted God, to whom you may confidently commit them, Jer. xlix. 11. "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." The world can bear witness of signal settlements made upon the children of providence; such as, by their pious parents, have been cast upon God's providential care. It has been often remarked, that they wanted neither provision nor education. Moses is an eminent instance of this. He,

he was an out-cast infant, Exod. ii. 3. yet was learn-  
all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Acts vii. 22. and  
ne king in Jeshurun, Deut. xxxiii. 5. O ! may we  
e ashamed, that we do not securely trust him with  
ncerns of our families, to whom, as our Saviour and  
emer, we have committed our eternal interests !

se 2. Death will take us away from our dear  
ls ; yea, we shall not see the Lord in the land of the  
s, in the blessed ordinances.—*Ans.* It will take you  
ur best friend, the Lord Christ. And the friends  
eave behind you, if they be indeed persons of worth,  
ill meet them again, when they come to heaven ;  
you will never be separated any more. If death  
ou away from the temple below, it will carry you to  
emple above. It will indeed take you from the  
ns, but it will set you down by the fountain. If it  
ut your candle, it will carry you where there is no  
, where there is an eternal day.

se 3. I have so much ado, in time of health, to satis-  
yself, as to my interest in Christ, about my being a  
Christian, a regenerate man ; that I judge it is almost  
ssible I should die comfortably.—*Ans.* If it is thus with  
hen double your diligence, to make your calling and  
on sure. Endeavour to grow in knowledge, and walk  
y with God ; be diligent in self-examination ; and  
earnestly for the Holy Spirit, whereby you may know  
ings freely given you of God. If you are enabled,  
power and Spirit of Christ, thus diligently to prose-  
our spiritual concerns ; though the time of your life  
ither day nor night ; yet, at evening time, it may be

Many weak Christians indulge doubts and fears about  
spiritual state, as if they placed, at least, some part of  
on in this imprudent practice ; but, towards the period  
; they are forced to think and act in another manner.  
raveller, who reckons he has time to spare, may stand  
debating with himself, whether this or the other be  
ght way ; but when the sun begins to set, he is forced  
aside his scruples, and resolutely to go forward on the  
ne judges to be the right one, lest he lie all night in  
pen fields. Thus some Christians, who perplex them-  
s much, throughout the course of their lives, with jeal-  
doubts and fears, content themselves, when they come

to die, with such evidences of the safety of their state, as they could not be satisfied with before ; and by disputing less against themselves, and believing more, court the peace they formerly rejected, and gain it too.

*Case 4.* I am under a sad decay, in respect of my spiritual condition.—*Ans.* Bodily consumptions may make death easy ; but it is not so in spiritual decays. I will not say, that a godly man cannot be in such a case, when he dies ; but I believe it is rarely so. Ordinarily, I suppose, a cry comes to awaken sleepy virgins, before death comes. Samson is set to grind in the prison, until his locks grow again. David and Solomon fell under great spiritual decays ; but, before they died, they recovered their spiritual strength and vigour. However, bestir ye yourselves, without delay, to strengthen the things that remain ; your fright will be the less, that ye awake from spiritual sleep, ere death comes to your bed-side : And ye ought to lose no time, seeing ye know not how soon death may seize you.

*Case 5.* It is terrible to think of the other world, that world of spirits, which I have so little acquaintance with.—*Ans.* Thy best friend is Lord of that other world. Abraham's bosom is kindly, even to those who never saw his face. After death thy soul becomes capable of converse with the blessed inhabitants of that other world. The spirits of just men made perfect were once such as thy spirit now is. And as for the angels, howsoever they be of a superior nature, in the rank of beings, yet our nature is dignified above theirs, in the man Christ ; and they are, all of them, thy Lord's servants, and so thy fellow-servants.

*Case 6.* The pangs of death are terrible.—*Ans.* Yet not so terrible as pangs of conscience, caused by a piercing sense of guilt, and apprehensions of divine wrath, with which I suppose thee to be not altogether unacquainted. But who would not endure bodily sickness, that the soul may become sound, and every whit whole ? Each pang of death will set sin a step nearer the door ; and with the last breath, the body of sin will breath out its last. The pains of death will not last long ; and the Lord thy God will not leave, but support thee, under them.

*Case 7.* But I am like to be cut off in the midst of my days.—*Ans.* Do not complain, you will be the sooner at home ; You have thereby the advantage of your fellow-h-

bourers, who were at work before you in the vineyard: God, in the course of his providence, hides some early in the grave, that they may be taken away from the evil to come. An early removal out of this world prevents much sin and misery: And they have no ground of complaint, who get the residue of their years in Immanuel's land. Surely thou shalt live as long as thou hast work cut out for thee, by the great Master, to be done for him in this world; and when that is at an end, it is high time to be gone.

*Case 8.* I am afraid of sudden death.—*Ans.* Thou may indeed die so. Good Eli died suddenly, 1 Sam. iv. 18. Yet death found him watching, ver. 12. "Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour the Lord doth come," Matth. xxv. 42. But be not afraid, it is an unexpressible comfort, that death, come when it will, can never catch thee out of Christ; and, therefore, can never seize thee, as a jailor, to hurry thee into the prison of hell. Sudden death may hasten and facilitate thy passage to heaven, but can do thee no prejudice.

*Case 9.* I am afraid it may be my lot to die wanting the exercise of reason.—*Ans.* I make no question but a child of God, a true Christian, may die in this case. But what harm? There is no hazard in it, as to his eternal state; a disease, at death, may divest him of his reason, but not of his religion. When a man, going a long voyage, has put his affairs in order, and put all his goods aboard; he himself may be carried aboard the ship sleeping: All is safe with him, although he knows not where he is, till he awakes in the ship. Even so the godly man, who dies in this case, may die uncomfortably, but not unsafely.

*Case last.* I am naturally timorous, and the very thoughts of death are terrible to me.—*Ans.* The less you think on death, the thoughts of it will be the more frightful; but make it familiar to you by frequent meditations upon it, and you may thereby allay your fears. Look at the white and bright side of the cloud; take faith's view of the city that hath foundations; so shall you see hope in your death. Be duly affected with the body of sin and death, and frequent interruptions of your communion with God, and with the glory which dwells on the other side of death: This will contribute much to remove slavish fear.

It is pity saints should be so fond of life as they often

are; they ought always to be in good terms with death. When matters are duly considered, it might well be expected every child of God, every regenerate man, should generously profess concerning this life, what Job did, chap. vii. 16. "I lothe it; I would not live always." In order to gain their hearts to this desirable temper, I offer the following additional considerations.

*First*, Consider the sinfulness that attends life in this world. While ye live here, ye sin, and see others sinning. Ye breathe infectious air. Ye live in a pest-house. Is it at all strange to lothe such a life? (1.) Your own pilgrim's sores are running on you. Doth not the sin of your nature make you groan daily? Are you not sensible, that though the cure be begun, it is yet far from being perfected? Has not the leprosy got into the walls of the house, which cannot be removed without pulling it down? Is not your nature so vitiated, that no less than the separation of the soul from the body can root out the disease? Have you not your sores without, as well as your sickness within? Do you not leave marks of your pollution on whatsoever passes through your hands? Are not all your actions tainted and blemished with defects and imperfections? Who else then should be much in love with life, but such whose sickness is their health, and who glory in their shame? (2.) The lothsome sores of others are always before your eyes, go where you will. The follies and wickedness of men are every where conspicuous, and make but an unpleasant scene. The sinful world is but an unsightly company, a disagreeable crowd, in which the most lothsome are the most numerous. (3.) Are not your own sores oft-times breaking out again, after healing? Frequent relapses may well cause us remit of our fondness for this life. To be ever struggling, and anon falling into the mire again, makes weary work. Do ye never wish for cold death, thereby effectually to cool the heat of these lusts which so often take fire again; even after a flood of godly sorrow has gone over them? (4.) Do not ye sometimes infect others, and others infect you? There is no society in the world, in which every member of it doth not sometimes lay a stumbling-block before the rest. The best carry about with them the tinder of a corrupt nature, which they cannot be rid of, while they live;

and which is liable to be kindled at all times, and in all places; yea, they are apt to inflame others, and become occasions of sinning. Certainly these things are apt to embitter this life to the saints.

*Secondly*, Consider the misery and trouble that attend it. The best is desirable, but it is not to be found on this side of the grave. Worldly troubles attend all men in this life. This world is a sea of trouble, where one wave rolls upon another. They who fancy themselves beyond the reach of trouble, are mistaken; no state, no stage of life, exempted from it. The crowned head is surrounded with thorny cares.—Honour many times paves the way to deep disgrace: *Riches* (for the most part) *are kept to the use of the owners*. The fairest rose wants not prickles; and the heaviest cross is sometimes found wrapt up in the sweetest earthly comfort. Spiritual troubles attend the saints in this life. They are like travellers travelling in cloudy night, in which the moon sometimes breaks out from under one cloud, but quickly hides her head again under another; no wonder they long to be at their journey's end. The sudden alterations the best frame of spirit is liable to, the perplexing doubts, confounding fears, short-lived joys, and long running sorrows, which have a certain affinity, with the present life, must needs create in the saints a desire to be with Christ, which is best of all.

*Lastly*, Consider the great imperfections attending this life. While the soul is lodged in this cottage of clay, the necessities of the body are many; it is always craving. The mud walls must be repaired and patched up daily, lest the clay cottage fall down for good and all. Eating, drinking, sleeping, and the like, are, in themselves, but mean employments for a rational creature; and will be reputed such by the heaven-born soul. They are badges of imperfection, and, as such, unpleasant to the mind, pointing unto that life and immortality, which is brought forth by light through the gospel; and would be very grievous, if this state of things were of long continuance. Doth not the gracious soul often find itself yoked with the body, with a companion in travel, unable to keep pace with it? When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. When the soul would mount upward, the body is as a clog up-



on it, and as a stone tied to the foot of a bird attempting to fly. The truth is, O believer ! thy soul in this body is, at best but like a diamond in a ring, where much of it is obscured ; it is far sunk in the vile clay, till relieved by death.

I conclude this subject with a few directions how to prepare for death, so as we may die comfortably. I speak not here of habitual preparation for death, which a true Christian, in virtue of his gracious state, never wants, from the time he is born again and united to Christ ; but of actual preparation or readiness, in respect of his circumstance, case, frame, and disposition of mind and spirit ; the want of which makes even a saint very unfit to die.

*First,* Let it be your constant care to keep a clean conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man, Acts xxiv. 17. Beware of standing controversy between God and you, on the account of some iniquity regarded in the heart. When an honest man is about to leave his country, and not to return, he settles accounts with those he had dealings with, and lays down methods for paying his debts timeously ; lest he be reckoned a bankrupt, and be attacked by an officer, when he is going off. Guilt lying on the conscience is a fountain of fears ; and will readily sting severely, when death stares the criminal in the face. Hence it is, that many, even of God's children when a-dying, are made to wish passionately, and desire eagerly, that they may live to do, what they ought to have done before that time. Wherefore, walk closely with God, be diligent, strict, and exact in your course ; beware of a loose, careless, and irregular conversation ; as ye would not lay up for yourselves anguish and bitterness of spirit, in a dying hour. And because, through the infirmity cleaving to us, in our present state of imperfection, in many things we offend all, renew your repentance daily, and be ever washing in the Redeemer's blood. As long as ye are in the world, ye will need to wash your feet, John xiii. 10. that is, to make application to the blood of Christ, anew, for purging your consciences from the guilt of daily miscarriages. Let death find you at the fountain : and if so, it will find you ready to answer its call.

*Secondly,* Be always watchful, waiting for your change ;

like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately, Luke xxi. 36. Beware of slumbering and sleeping, while the bridegroom tarries. To be awakened out of spiritual slumber, by a surprising call to pass into another world, is a very frightful thing : But he who is daily waiting for the coming of his Lord, shall comfortably receive the grim messenger, while he beholds him ushering in Him, of whom he may confidently say, *This is my God, I have waited for him.* The way to die comfortably is to die daily. Be often essaying as it were, to die. Bring yourselves familiarly acquainted with death, by making many visits to the grave, in serious meditations upon it. This was Job's practice, Chap. xvii. 13, 14. "I have made my bed in the darkness." Go thou, and do likewise ; and when death comes, thou shalt have nothing ado but to lie down. "I have said to corruption, thou art my father ; to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister." Do thou, say so too ; and thou wilt be the fitter to go home to their house. Be frequently reflecting upon your conduct, and considering what course of life you wish to be found in, when death arrests you ; and act accordingly. When you do the duties of your station in life, or are employed in acts of worship, think with yourselves, that, it may be, this is the last opportunity ; and, therefore, act as if you was never to do more of that kind. When you lie down at night, compose your spirits as if you was not to awake, till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning, consider that new day is your last ; and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh, of which you will never see the morning, or that morning, of which you will never see the night. But which of your mornings or nights will be such, you know not.

*Thirdly,* Employ yourselves much in weaning your hearts from the world. The man who is making ready to go abroad, busies himself in taking leave of his friends. Let the mantle of earthly enjoyments hang loose about you, that it may be easily dropped, when death comes to carry you away into another. Moderate your affections towards your lawful comforts of life ; and let not your hearts be too much taken with them. The traveller acts

unwisely, who suffers himself to be so allured with the conveniences of the inn, where he lodgeth, as to make his necessary departure from it grievous. Feed with fear, and walk through the world as pilgrims and strangers. Likeas, when the corn is forsaking the ground, it is ready for the sickle; when the fruit is ripe, it falls off the tree easily; so, when a Christian's heart is truly weaned from the world, he is prepared for death, and it will be the more easy to him. A heart disengaged from the world is an heavenly one; and then are we ready for heaven, when our heart is there before us, Matth. vi. 21.

*Fourthly*, Be diligent in gathering and laying up evidences of your title to heaven, for your support and comfort at the hour of death. The neglect hereof mars the joy and consolation, which some Christians might otherwise have at their death. Wherefore, examine yourselves frequently, as to your spiritual state; that evidences, which lie hid and unobserved, may be brought to light and taken notice of. And if you would manage this work successfully, make solemn work of it. Set apart some time for it. And after earnest prayer to God, through Jesus Christ, for the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit, whereby ye may be enabled to understand his own word, to discern his own work in your souls; sist yourselves before the tribunal of your consciences, that ye may judge yourselves in this weighty matter.

In the *first* place, Let the marks of a regenerate state be fixed; from the Lord's word; and have recourse to some particular text for that purpose, such as Prov. viii. 17. "I love them that love me." Compare Luke xiv. 26. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Psal. cxix. 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Psal. xviii. 23. "I was also upright before him; and I kept myself from mine iniquity." Compare Rom. vii. 22, 23. "For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind," &c. 1 John iii. 3. "And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Matth. v. 3. "Blessed

the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." *Mat. iii. 3.* "For we are the circumcision which worship (or serve) God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." The sum of the evidence arising from these texts lies here. A real Christian is one who loves God for himself, as well as for his benefits, and that with a supreme love, above all persons and things: He has an awful and impartial regard to God's commands; he opposeth and wrestleth against that sin, which of all others most easily besets him; he approveth and loveth the holy law, even in that very point, wherein it strikes against his most beloved self; his hope of heaven engageth him in the study of universal holiness; in the which he aims at perfection, though he cannot reach it in this life; he serves the Lord, not only in acts of worship, but in the whole of his conversation; and as to both, is spiritual in the principle, motives, aims, and ends of his service; yet he sees nothing in himself to trust to before the Lord: Christ and his fulness is the stay of his soul; and his confidence is set off from all that is not Christ, or in Christ, in point of justification, or acceptance with God, and in point of sanctification too. Every one in whom these characters are found has a title to heaven, according to the word. It is convenient and profitable to mark such texts for this special use, as they occur, while you read the scriptures, hear sermons. The marks of a regenerate state thus set out: in the *next* place, Impartially search and try your own hearts thereby, as in the sight of God, with dependence on him for spiritual discerning, that ye may know whether they be in you or not. And when ye find them, mark the conclusion deliberately and distinctly; namely, that therefore you are regenerate, and have a title to heaven. Thus you may gather evidences. But be sure to have recourse to God in Christ by earnest prayer, for the testimony of the Spirit, whose office is to bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, *Rom. vi. 16.* Moreover, carefully observe the course and method of Providence towards you; and likewise how your soul is affected under the same, in the various steps thereof; compare both with scripture doctrines, promises, threatenings, and examples, so shall ye perceive, if the

Lord deals with you as he useth to do unto those that love his name : And if you be going forth by the footsteps of the flock, this may afford you comfortable evidence. Walk tenderly and circumspectly ; and the Lord will manifest himself to you, according to his promise, John xiv. 21. " He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father ; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." But it is in vain to think on successful self-examination, if ye be loose and irregular in your conversation.

*Lastly*, Dispatch the work of your day and generation with speed and diligence. " David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep," Acts xiii. 36. God has allotted us certain pieces of work of this kind, which ought to be dispatched before the time of working be over, Eccl. ix. 10. " Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." Gal. vi. 10. " As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." If a passenger, after he is got on shipboard, and the ship is getting under sail, remember that he has omitted to dispatch a piece of necessary business when he was ashore, it must needs be uneasy to him : even so reflection in a dying hour, upon neglected seasons, and lost opportunities cannot fail to disquiet a Christian. Wherefore, whatever is incumbent upon thee to do for God's honour, and the good of others ; either as the duty of thy station, or by special opportunity put into thy hand, perform it seasonably, if thou wouldst die comfortably.

# HEAD III.

## THE RESURRECTION.

JOHN v. 28, 29.

*el not at this ; For the hour is coming, in the which  
hat are in the graves shall hear his voice : And shall  
e forth ; they that have done good unto the resur-  
ion of life ; and they that have done evil unto the  
irrection of damnation.*

THESE words are part of the defence our Lord Jesus Christ makes for himself, when persecuted by the for curing the impotent man, and ordering him to away his bed on the Sabbath ; and for vindicating aduct, when accused by them of having thereby pro- that day. On this occasion, he professeth himself ly Lord of the Sabbath, but also Lord of life and ; declaring, in the words of the text, the resurrec- of the dead to be brought to pass by his power. This roduceth with these words, as with a solemn preface, *el not at this ; i. e.* at this strange discourse of mine : t wonder to hear me, whose appearance is so very in your eyes, talk at this rate ; for the day is com- n which the dead shall be raised by my power. erve in this text, (1.) The doctrine of the resurrec- asserted, *All that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, me forth.* The dead bodies, which are reduced to shall revive, and evidence life by hearing and moving. he author of it, Jesus Christ, *the Son of man*, ver. 27. ead shall hear his voice, and be raised thereby. (3.)

The number that shall be raised, *All that are in the grave, i. e.* all the dead bodies of men, howsoever differently disposed of, as it were, in different kinds of graves ; or all the dead, good or bad. They are not all buried in graves, properly so called ; some are burnt to ashes, some drowned, and buried in the bellies of fishes ; yea some devoured by man-eaters called Cannibals ; but wheresoever the matter or substance, of which the body was composed, is to be found, thence they shall come forth. (4.) The great distinction that shall be made betwixt the godly and the wicked. They shall indeed both rise again in the resurrection. None of the godly will be missing ; though, perhaps, they either had no burial, or a very obscure one ; and all the wicked shall come forth ; their vaulted tombs shall hold them no longer than the voice is uttered. But the former shall have a joyful resurrection to life, while the latter have a dreadful resurrection to damnation. *Lastly*, The set time of this great event : There is an *hour*, or certain fixed period of time, appointed of God for it. We are not told when that hour will be, but that it is coming ; for this among other reasons ; that we may always be ready.

#### DOCTRINE.

*There shall be a Resurrection of the Dead.*

In discoursing of this subject, I shall, *First*, Shew the certainty of the resurrection. *Secondly*, I shall enquire into the nature of it : And, *Lastly*, Make some practical improvement of the whole.

I. In shewing the certainty of the resurrection, I shall evince, (1.) That God can raise the dead. And, (2.) That he will do it : Which are the two grounds or topics laid down by Christ himself, when disputing with the Sadducees, Mat. xxii. 29. *Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.*

*First*, Seeing God is Almighty, surely he can raise the dead. We have instances of this powerful work of God, both in the Old and New Testament. The son of the widow in Sarepta was raised from the dead, 1 Kings xvii. 22. The Shunamite's son, 2 Kings iv. 35. And the man

cast into the sepulchre of Elisha, chap. xiii. 31. In which we may observe a gradation, the second of these miraculous events being more illustrious than the first, and the third than the second. The first of these persons was raised when he was but newly dead ; the prophet Elijah who raised him, being present at his decease. The second, when he had lain dead a considerable time ; namely, while his mother travelled from Shunem to mount Carmel, (reckoned about the distance of sixteen miles) and returned from thence to her house with Elisha, who raised him. The last, not till they were burying him, and the corpse was cast into the prophet's grave. In like manner in the New Testament, Jairus' daughter, (Mark v. 41.) and Dorcas (Acts ix. 40.) were both raised to life, when lately dead ; the widow's son in Nain, when they were carrying him out to bury him, Luke vii. 11. 15. And Lazarus, when stinking in the grave, John xi. 39. 44.

Can men make curious glasses out of ashes, reduce flowers into ashes, and raise them again out of these ashes, restoring them to their former beauty ; and cannot the great Creator, who made all things of nothing, raise man's body after it is reduced into dust ? If it be objected, How can men's bodies be raised up again after they are dissolved into dust, and the ashes of many generations are mingled together ? Scripture and not reason, furnishes the answer, *With men it is impossible, but not with God.* It is absurd for men to deny that God can do a thing, because they see not how it may be done. How small a portion do we know of his ways ! How absolutely incapable are we of conceiving distinctly of the extent of almighty power, and much more of comprehending its actings, and the method of procedure ! I question not, but many illiterate men are as great infidels to many chymical experiments, as some learned men are to the doctrine of the resurrection ; and as these last are ready to deride the former, so the Lord will have them in derision. What a mystery was it to the Indians, that the Europeans could, by a piece of paper, converse together at the distance of some hundreds of miles ? And how much were they astonished to see them with their guns, produce as it were, thunder and lightning in a moment, and at pleasure kill men afar off ? **Shall some men do such things as are wonders in the eyes**



of others, because they cannot comprehend them; and, Shall men confine the infinite power of God, within the narrow boundaries of their own shallow capacities, in a matter no ways contrary to reason? An inferior nature has but a very imperfect conception of the power of a superior. Brutes do not conceive of the actings of reason in men: And men have but lame notions of the power of angels; how low and inadequate a conception, then, must a finite nature have of the power of that which is infinite! Though we cannot conceive how God acts, yet we ought to believe he can do above what we can think or can conceive of.

Wherefore, let the bodies of men be laid in the grave; let them rot there, and be resolved into the most minute particles; or let them be burnt, and the ashes cast into rivers, or thrown up into the air, to be scattered by the wind; let the dust of a thousand generations be mingled and the streams of the dead bodies wander to and fro in the air; let birds or wild beasts eat the dead bodies, or the fishes of the sea devour them, so that the parts of human bodies, thus destroyed, pass into substantial parts of birds, beasts, or fishes; or what is more than that, let man-eaters, who themselves must die, and rise again, devour human bodies, and let others devour them again; and then let our modern Sadducees propose the question in these cases, as the ancient Sadducees did, in the case of the woman, who had been married to seven husbands successively, *Mat. xxii. 28.* We answer, as our blessed Lord and Saviour did, *ver. 26. Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.* We believe God to be omniscient, and omnipotent, infinite in knowledge and in power; and hence, agreeable to the dictates of reason, we conclude the possibility of the resurrection, even in the cases supposed.

Material things may change their forms and shapes, may be resolved into the principles of which they are formed; But they are not annihilated, or reduced to nothing; nor can they be so, by any created power. God is omniscient, his understanding is infinite, therefore he knows all things whatsoever; what they were, at any time, what they are, and where they are to be found. Though the country-man, who comes into the apothecary's shop, cannot find out the drug he wants, yet the apothecary himself knows what

he has in his shop, whence it came, and where it is to be found. And in a mingle of many different seeds, the expert gardener can distinguish betwixt seed and seed: Why then may not omniscience distinguish betwixt dust and dust? Can he, who knows all things to perfection, be liable to any mistake about his own creatures! Whoso believes an infinite understanding, must needs own, that no mass of dust is so jumbled together, but God perfectly comprehends, and infallibly knows how the most minute particle, and every one of them, is to be matched. And therefore he knows where the particles of each dead body are, whether in the earth, sea, or air; how confused soever they lie. And particularly, he knows where to find the primitive substance of the man-eater; howsoever evaporated or reduced, as it were, into air or vapour, by sweat or perspiration; and how to separate the parts of the body that was eaten, from the body of the eater, howsoever incorporate, or made one body with it; and so understands, not only how, but whence, he is to bring back the primitive substance of the man-eater to its proper place; and also to separate from the man-eater's body, that part of the devoured body which goes into its substance, and is indeed but a very small part of it. It is certain, the bodies of men, as of all other animals, or living creatures, are in a continual flux; they grow, and are sustained, by daily food, so small a part whereof becomes nourishment, that the most part is evacuated. And it is reckoned that, at least as much of the food is evacuated insensibly by perspiration, as is voided by other perceptible ways. Yea, the nourishing part of the food, when assimilated, and thereby become a part of the body is evacuated by perspiration through the pores of the skin, and again supplied by the use of the food; yet the body is still reckoned one, and the same body. Whence we may conclude, that it is not essential to the resurrection of the body, that every particle of the matter, which at any time was part of a human body, should be restored to it, when it is raised up from death to life. Were it so, the bodies of men would become of so huge a size, that they would bear no resemblance of the persons. It is sufficient to denominate it the same body that died, when it is risen again; if the body that is raised be formed

in its former proportions of the same particles of matter, which at any time were its constituent parts, howsoever it be refined; like as, we reckon it is the same body that was pined away by long sickness, which becomes fat and fair again after recovery.

Now, to this infinite understanding join infinite power, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself; and this glorious great work appears most reasonable. If omniscience discover every little particle of dust, where it is, and how it is to be matched; cannot omnipotence bring them, and join them together in their order? Can the watch-maker take up the several pieces of a watch, lying in a confused heap before him, and set each in its proper place; and cannot God put the human body into order, after its dissolution? Did he speak this world into being out of nothing; and can he not form man's body out of its pre-existent matter? If he calleth those things which be not, as though they were, surely he can call things that are dissolved to be as they were, before the compound was resolved into its parts and principles: Wherefore, God can raise the dead. And "*Wherefore should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead.*" Acts xxvi. 8.

Secondly, God will do it. He not only can do it, but he certainly will do it, because he has said it. Our text is very full to this purpose: "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice; and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." These words relate to, and are an explanation of, that part of Daniel's prophecy, Dan. xii. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The which appears to have been calculated to confront the doctrine of the Sadducees; which the Holy Ghost knew was to be at a great height in the Jewish church, under the persecution of Antiochus. There are many other texts in the Old and New Testaments, that might here be adduced; such as Acts xxiv. 15. "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow; that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, of the just and unjust." And Job xix. 26, 27. "And though,

after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another ; though my reins be consumed within me." But I need not multiply testimonies, in a matter so clearly and frequently taught in sacred scripture. Our Lord and Saviour himself proves it, against the Sadducees, in that remarkable text, Luke. xix. 37, 38. " Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob : For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living ; for all live unto him." These holy patriarchs were now dead ; nevertheless, the LORD JEHOVAH is called their God, namely in virtue of the covenant of grace, and in the sense thereof ; in which sense, the phrase comprehends all blessedness, as that which, by the covenant, is secured to them who are in it, Heb. xi. 16. " God is not ashamed to be called their God ; for he hath prepared for them a city." He is not called the God of their souls only ; but *their* God, the God of their persons, souls, and bodies ; the which, by virtue of his truth and faithfulness, must have its full effect : Now it cannot have its full effect on the dead, who, in as far as they are dead, are far from all blessedness ; but on the living, who alone are capable of it ; therefore, since God is still called *their* God, they are living in respect of God, although their bodies are yet in the grave ; for in respect of him, who by his power can restore them to life, and in his covenant has declared his will and purpose so to do, and whose promise cannot fail, they all are to be reckoned to live ; and, consistent with the covenant, their death is but a sleep, out of which, in virtue of the same covenant, securing all blessedness to their persons, their whole man, they must and shall certainly be awakened. The apostle Paul proves the resurrection at large, 1 Cor. xv. and shews it to be a fundamental article, the denial whereof is subversive of Christianity, ver. 13, 14. " If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

To assist us in conceiving of it, the scripture gives us types of the resurrection of the dead ; as the dry bones

living, Ezek. xxxviii. Jonah's coming out of the whale's belly, Mat. xii. 40. And nature affords us emblems and resemblances of it; as the suns setting and rising again, night and day, winter and summer, sleeping and awaking, swallows in winter, lying void of all appearance of life, in ruinous buildings, and subterraneous caverns, and reviving in the spring seasons; the seeds dying under the clod, and thereafter springing up again: All which, and the like, may justly be admitted, as designed by the God of nature, though not for proofs, yet for memorials of the resurrection; whereof we have assurance from the scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 36. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die."

II. I shall enquire into the nature of the resurrection, shewing, *1st*, Who shall be raised. *2dly*, What shall be raised. *3dly*, How the dead shall be raised.

*First*, Who shall be raised? Our text tells us who they are; namely, All that are in the graves; *i. e.* all mankind, who are dead. As for those persons who shall be found alive at the second coming of Christ, they shall not die, and soon thereafter be raised again, but such a change shall suddenly pass upon them, as shall be to them instead of dying and rising again; so that their bodies shall become like to those bodies which are raised out of the graves, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Hence those who are to be judged at the great day are distinguished into quick and dead, Acts x. 42. All the dead shall arise, whether godly or wicked, just or unjust, (Acts xxiv. 15.) old or young; the whole race of mankind, even those who never saw the sun, but died in their mother's belly, Rev. xx. 12. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." The sea and earth shall give up their dead, without reserve; none shall be kept back.

*Secondly*, What shall be raised? The bodies of mankind. A man is said to die, when the soul is separated from the body, and returns unto God who gave it, Eccles. xii. 7. But it is the body only which is laid in the grave, and can be properly said to be raised: Wherefore the resurrection is, strictly speaking, competent to the body only. Moreover, it is the same body that

clies, which shall rise again. At the resurrection, men shall not appear with other bodies for substance, than these which they now have, and which are laid down in the grave: But with the self-same bodies endowed with other qualities. The very notion of a resurrection implies this; since nothing can be said to rise again, but that which falls. But to illustrate it a little. *First*, It is plain from Scripture-testimony: The Apostle tells, it is this mortal which must put on immortality, 1 Cor. xv. 53. and that Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, Philip. iii. 21. Death, in scripture-language, is a sleep, and the resurrection an awaking out of that sleep, Job xiv. 12. which shows the body rising up, to be the self-same that died. *Secondly*, The equity of the divine procedure, both with respect to the godly and the wicked, evinces this. It is not reckoned equal among men, that one do the work, and another get the reward. Though the glorifying of the bodies of the saints, is not, properly speaking, and in a strict sense, the reward of their services or sufferings on earth; yet this is evident, that it is not at all agreeable to the manner of the divine dispensation, that one body serve him, and another be glorified; that one fight, and another receive the crown. How can it be imagined, that the temples of the Holy Ghost (as these bodies of believers are termed, 1 Cor. vi. 19.) should always lie in rubbish; and others be reared up in their stead: That these members of Christ (ver. 15.) shall perish utterly, and other bodies comes in their room? Nay, surely, as these bodies of the saints now bear a part in glorifying God, and some of them suffer in his cause; so they shall partake of the glory that is to be revealed. And these bodies of the wicked, which are laid in the dust, shall be raised again; that the same body, which sinned, may suffer. Shall one body sin here, and another suffer in hell for that sin? Shall that body, which was the soul's companion in sin, lie for ever hid in the dust; and another body, which did not act any part in sinning, be its companion in torment? No, no; it is that body, which now takes up all the thoughts to provide for its back and belly, that shall be raised up, to suffer in hell. It is that tongue that is now the swearing, lying tongue, which will need water

to cool it, in eternal flames. These same feet, that now stand in the way of sinners, and carry men in their ungodly courses, shall stand in the burning lake. And these now covetous and lascivious eyes, shall take part in the fire and smoke of the pit.

*Thirdly*, How the dead shall be raised. The same Jesus, who was crucified without the gate of Jerusalem, shall, at the last day, to the conviction of all, be declared both Lord and Christ; appearing as Judge of the world, attended with his mighty angels, 2 Thes. i. 7. He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel and with the trump of God, 1 Thes. iv. 16. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and these who are alive, changed, 1 Cor. xv. 52. Whether this shout, voice and trumpet, do denote some audible voice, or only the workings of divine power, for the raising of the dead, and other awful purposes of that day (though the former seems probable) I will not positively determine. There is no question but this coming of the Judge of the world will be in greater majesty and terror, than we can conceive: Yet that awful grandeur, majesty and state, which was displayed at the giving of the law, viz. thunders heard, lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount seen; the Lord descending in fire, the whole mount quaking greatly, and the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, (Exod. xix. 16, 18, 19.) may help forward a becoming thought of it. However, the sound of this trumpet shall be heard all the world over; it shall reach to the depths of the sea, and into the bowels of the earth. At this loud alarm, bones shall come together, bone to his bone: the scattered dust of all the dead shall be gathered together, dust to his dust; neither shall one thrust another, they shall walk every one in his path; and meeting together again, shall make up that very same body, which crumbled into dust in the grave. And at the same alarming voice, shall every soul come again into its own body, never more to be separated. The dead can stay no longer in their graves, but must bid an eternal farewell to their long homes: They hear his voice, and must come forth; and receive their final sentence.

Now, as there is a great difference betwixt the godly

and the wicked in their life, and in their death; so will there be also in their resurrection.

The godly shall be raised up out of their graves, by virtue of the Spirit of Christ, the blessed bond of their union with him, Rom. viii. 11. "He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Jesus Christ arose from the dead, as the first-fruits of them that slept, 1 Cor. xv. 20. So they that are Christ's shall follow at his coming, ver. 23. The mystical Head having got above the waters of death, he cannot but bring forth the members after him in due time.

They shall come forth with inexpressible joy; for then shall that passage of scripture, which, in its immediate scope respected the Babylonish captivity, be fully accomplished in its extensive spiritual view, Isaiah xxvi. 19. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust." As a bride, adorned for her husband, goes forth of her bed-chamber unto the marriage; so shall the saints go forth of their graves, unto the marriage of the Lamb. Joseph had a joyful out-going from the prison, Daniel from the lion's den, and Jonah from the whale's belly; yet those are but faint representations of the saint's out-going from the grave at the resurrection. Then shall they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, in highest strains; death being quite swallowed up in victory. They had, while in this life, sometimes sung, by faith, the triumphant song over death and the grave, "O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv. 55. But when they sing the same, from sight and sense; the black band of doubts and fears, which frequently disturbed them; and disquieted their minds, is for ever cashiered.

May we not suppose the soul and body of every saint as in mutual embraces, to rejoice in each other, and triumph in their happy meeting again? And may not one imagine the body to address the soul thus? "O my soul, have we got together again, after so long a separation! art thou come back into thine old habitation, never more to remove! O joyful meeting! how unlike is our present state to what our case was, when a separation was made betwixt us at death! now is our mourning turned into joy; the light and gladness sometime sown, are now sprung up, and



there is perpetual spring in Immanuel's land. Blessed be the day, in which I was united to thee, whose chief care was to get Christ in us the hope of glory, and to make me a temple for his Holy Spirit. O blessed soul, which, in the time of our pilgrimage, kept thine eye on the land then afar off, but now near at hand ! thou tookest me up into secret places, and there madest me bow these knees before the Lord, that I might bear a part in our humiliations before him ; and now is the due time, and I am lifted up. Thou didst employ this tongue, in confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings, which henceforth shall be employed in praising for evermore. Thou madest these (sometimes) weeping eyes sow that seed of tears, which is now sprung up in joy that shall never end. I was happily beat down by thee, and kept in subjection ; while others pampered their flesh, and made their bellies their gods, to their own destruction : And, now I gloriously arise, to take my place in the mansions of glory, whilst they are dragged out of their graves, to be cast into fiery flames. Now, my soul, thou shalt complain no more of a sick and pained body, thou shalt be no more clogged with weak and weary flesh ; I shall now hold pace with thee in the praises of our God for evermore." And may not the soul say, " O happy day in which I return to dwell in that blessed body, which was, and is, and will be for ever a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit ! now shall I be eternally knit to thee ; the silver cord shall never be loosed more ; death shall never make another separation betwixt us. Arise then, my body, and come away ; and let these eyes, which served to weep over my sins, behold now with joy, the face of our glorious Redeemer ; Lo ! this is our God, and we have waited for him. Let these ears, which served to hear the word of life, in the temple below, come now and hear the hallelujahs in the temple above. Let these feet, that carried me to the congregation of saints on earth, take their place now among these who stand by. And let that tongue, which confessed Christ before men, and used to be still dropping something to his commendation, join the choir of the upper house in his praises for evermore. Thou shalt fast no more, but keep an everlasting feast ; thou shalt weep no more, neither shall thy countenance be overclouded ; but thou shalt shine for ever, as a star in

the firmament. We took part together in the fight, come now, let us go together to receive and wear the crown.

But, on the other hand, the wicked shall be raised by the power of Christ, as a just Judge, who is to render vengeance to his enemies. The same divine power which shut up their souls in hell, and kept their bodies in a grave, as in a prison, shall bring them forth, that soul and body together may receive the dreadful sentence of eternal damnation, and be shut up together in the prison of hell !

They shall come forth of their graves, with unspeakable horror and consternation. They shall be dragged forth as so many malefactors out of a dungeon, to be led to execution ; crying to the mountains and to the rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb. Fearful was the cry in Egypt, that night the destroying angel went through, and slew their first born. Dreadful were the shouts, at the earth opening her mouth, and swallowing up Dathan and Abiram, and all that appertained to them. What hideous crying then must there be, when at the sound of the last trumpet, the earth and sea shall open their mouths, and cast forth all the wicked world, delivering them up to the dreadful Judge ? How will they cry, roar, and tear themselves ! how will the jovial companions weep and howl, and curse one another ! how will the earth be filled with their doleful shrieks and lamentations, while they are pulled out like sheep for the slaughter ? They who, while they lived in the world, were profane debauchees, covetous, worldlings, or formal hypocrites, shall then, in anguish of mind, wring their hands, beat their breasts, and bitterly lament their case ; roaring forth their complaints, and calling themselves beasts, fools and mad-men, for having acted so mad a part in this life, and not having believed what they then see !

They were driven away in their wickedness at death ; and now all their sins rise with them, and like so many serpents twist themselves about their wretched souls, and bodies too, which have now a frightful meeting after a long separation.

Then we may suppose the miserable body thus to accost the soul : " Hast thou again found me, O mine enemy, my worst enemy ! savage soul ! more cruel than a thousand tygers ! Cursed be the day that ever we met ! O that

The apostle is very express, Acts xxvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." See Mat. xvi. 27. 2 Cor. v. 10. 2 Thes. i. 7, 8, 9, 10. Rev. xx. 11—15. God has not only said it, but he has sworn it, Rom. xiv. 10, 11. "We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So that the truth of God is most solemnly plighted for it.

*Secondly,* The rectoral justice and goodness of God, the sovereign Ruler of the world, do necessarily require it, inasmuch as they require its being well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked. Howbeit, we often now see wickedness exalted, while truth and righteousness fall in the streets; piety oppressed, while profanity and irreligion do triumph. This is so very ordinary, that every one, who sincerely embraceth the way of holiness, must and doth lay his account with the loss of all he has, which the world can take away from him, Luke xiv. 26. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." But it is inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God, that the affairs of men should always continue in this state, which they appear in, from one generation to another, but that every man be rewarded according to his works; and since that is not done in this life, there must be a judgment to come, "Seeing it is righteous with God, to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven," 2 Thes. i. 6, 7. "There will be a day, in which the tables will be turned; and the wicked shall be called to an account for all their sins, and suffer the due punishment of them; and the pious shall be the prosperous; for, as the apostle argues for the happy resurrection of the saints, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," 1 Cor. xv. 19. It is true, God sometimes punisheth the wicked in this life, that men may know, he is a God that judgeth in the earth; but yet much wickedness remains unpunished, and undiscovered, to be a pledge of the judgment to

come. If none of the wicked were punished here, they would conclude, that God had utterly forsaken the earth ; if all of them were punished in this life, men would be apt to think, there is no after-reckoning, Therefore, in the wisdom of God, some are punished now, and some not. Sometimes the Lord smites sinners, in the very act of sin, to shew unto the world, that he is witness to all their wickedness, and will call them to an account for it. Sometimes he delays long, ere he strike ; that he may discover to the world, that he forgets not mens ill deeds, though he does not presently punish them. Besides all this, the sins of many do outlive them ; and the impure fountain, by them opened, runs long after they are dead and gone. As in the case of Jeroboam the first king of the ten tribes ; whose sin did run on all along unto the end, of that unhappy kingdom, 2 Kings xvii. 22, 23. " The children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam, which he did ; they departed not from them ; until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight.

*Thirdly,* The resurrection of Christ is a certain proof that there shall be a day of judgment. This argument Paul useth to convince the Athenians: says he, " He hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead, Acts xvii. 31. The judge is already named, his patent written and sealed, yea and read before all men, in his rising again from the dead. Hereby God hath given assurance of it (or offered faith, Marg.) He hath by raising Christ from the dead, exhibited his credentials as Judge of the world. When, in the days of his humiliation, he was sisted before a tribunal, arraigned, accused, and condemned of men ; he plainly told them of this judgment, and that he himself would be the Judge, Math. xxvi. 64. Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. And now that he was raised from the dead, though condemned as a blasphemer on this very head, is it not an undeniable proof from heaven, of the truth of what he asserted? Moreover, this was one of the great ends of Christ's death and resurrection ; " For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord" (i. e. The Lord Judge, as is evident from the context,) " both of the dead and of the living," Rom. xiv. 9.

and daughters ; every one who has had, or, to the end of the world, shall have, a living soul united to a body, will make up this great congregation. Even those who refused to come to the throne of grace, shall be forced to the bar of justice ; for there can be no hiding from the all-seeing Judge, no flying from him who is present every where, no resisting him who is armed with almighty power. " We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 10. " Before him shall be gathered all nations," says the text. This is to be done by the ministry of angels. By them shall the elect be gathered, Mark xiii. 27. " They shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds." And they also shall gather the reprobate, Matth. xiii. 40, 41. " So shall it be in the end of this world, The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." From all corners of the world, shall the inhabitants thereof be gathered unto the place, where he shall set his throne for judgment.

*Sixthly*, There shall be a separation made betwixt the righteous and the wicked ; the fair company of the elect sheep being set on Christ's right hand, and the reprobate goats on his left. There is no necessity to wait for this separation, till the trial be over ; since the parties do rise out of their graves, with plain outward marks of distinction, as was cleared before. The separation seems to be effected by that double gathering before mentioned ; the one of the elect, Mark xiii. 27. the other of them that do iniquity, Matth. xiii. 41. The elect being caught up together in the clouds, meet the Lord in the air, (1 Thess. iv. 17.) and so are set on his right hand : and the reprobate left on the earth (Matth. xxv. 40.) upon the Judge's left hand. Here is now a total separation of two parties, who were always opposite to each other, in their principles, aims, and manner of life ; who, when together, were a burden the one to the other, under which the one groaned, and the other raged ; but now they are freely parted, never to come together any more. The iron and clay (alluded to Dan. ii. 41, 43.) which could never mix, are quite separated ; the one being drawn up into the air, by the attractive virtue of the stone cut out of the moun-

tain, namely, Jesus Christ ; the other left upon its earth to be trod under foot.

Now let us look to the right hand, and there we will see a glorious company of saints, shining as so many stars in their orbs ; and with a cheerful countenance, beholding him who sitteth upon the throne. Here will be two wonderful sights, which the world used not to see. (1.) A great congregation of saints, in which is not so much as one hypocrite. There was a bloody Cain in Adam's family, a cursed Ham in Noah's family, in the ark ; a treacherous Judas in Christ's own family, but in that company shall be none but sealed ones, members of Christ, having all one Father : And this is a sight reserved for that day. (2.) All the godly upon one side. Seldom or never do the saints on earth make such a harmony, but there is some jarring strings among them. It is not to be expected, that men who see but in part, though they be all going to one city, will agree as to every step in the way ; no, we need not look for it, in this state of imperfection. But at that day, Paul and Barnabas shall meet in peace and unity, tho' once the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder, the one from the other, Acts xv. 39. There shall be no more divisions, no more separate standing, amongst those who belong to Christ. All the godly of the different parties, shall then be upon one side ; seeing, whatever were their differences in lesser things, while in the world, yet even then, they met and concentered all in one Lord Jesus Christ, by a true and lively faith, and in the one way of holiness or practical godliness. And the naughty hypocrite, of whatsoever party, shall be led forth with the workers of iniquity.

Look to the left hand, and there you will see the cursed goats (all the wicked ones, from Cain to the last ungodly person who shall be in the world) gathered together into one most miserable congregation. There are many assemblies of the wicked now ; then there shall be but one. But all of them shall be present there, brought together as one herd for the slaughter, bellowing and roaring, weeping and howling for the miseries come on them. (And remember thou shalt not be a mere spectator, to look at these two so different companies ; but must take thy place in one of the two, and shalt share with the company, whatever

hand it be upon.) These who now abhor no society so much as that of the saints, would then be glad to be allowed to get in among them, though it were but to lie among their feet. But then not one tare shall be found with the wheat: he will thoroughly purge his floor. Many of the right-hand men of this world, will be left-hand men in that day. Many who must have the door and the right hand of these, who are better than they, (if the righteous be more excellent than his neighbour) shall then be turned to the left hand, as most despicable wretches. O how terrible will this separation be to the ungodly! how dreadful will this gathering them together into one company be! what they will not believe, they will then see, namely, that but few are saved. They think it enough now, to be neighbour-like, and can securely follow the multitude; but the multitude on the left hand will yield them no comfort. How will it sting the ungodly Christian, to see himself set on the same hand with Turks and Pagans! how will it gall men to find themselves standing, profane Protestants, with idolatrous Papists; praying people with their profane neighbours, who mocked at religious exercises; formal professors, strangers to the new birth and the power of godliness, with persecutors! now there are many opposite societies in the world, but then all the ungodly shall be in one society. And how dreadful will the faces of companions in sin be to one another there! what doleful shrieks when the whoremonger and his whore shall meet; when the drunkards, who have had many a jovial day together, shall see one another in the face; when the husband and wife, the parents and children, the master and servants, and neighbours, who have been snares and stumbling-blocks to one another, to the ruin of their own souls, and these of their relatives, shall meet again in that miserable society! Then will there be curses instead of salutations; and tearing of themselves, and raging against one another, instead of the wonted embraces.

*Seventhly*, The parties shall be tried. The Trial cannot be difficult, in regard the Judge is omniscient, and nothing can be hid from him. But, that his righteous judgment may be evident to all, he will set the hidden things of darkness in clearest light at that trial; 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Men shall be tried, *First*, Upon their works: for,

“God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.” *Ecccl. xii. 14.* The Judge will try every man’s conversation, and set his deeds done in the body, with all the circumstances thereof, in a true light. Then will many actions commended and applauded of men, as good and just, be discovered to have been evil and abominable in the sight of God; and many works, now condemned by the world, will be approven and commended by the great Judge, as good and just. Secret things will be brought to light: and what was hid from the view of the world, shall be laid open. Wickedness, which hath kept its lurking place in spite of all human search, will then be brought forth to the glory of God, and the confusion of impenitent sinners who hid it. The world appears now very vile in the eyes of those who are exercised to godliness; but it will then appear a thousand times more vile, when that which is done of men in secret, comes to be discovered. Every good action shall then be remembered; and the hidden religion and good works, most industriously concealed by the saints, from the eyes of men, shall no more lie hid; for though the Lord will not allow men to proclaim every man his own goodness, yet he himself will do it in due time. *Secondly*, Their words shall be judged, *Matth. xii. 37.* “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Not a word spoken for God, and his cause in the world, from love to himself shall be forgotten. They are all kept in remembrance, and shall be brought forth as evidences of faith, and of an interest in Christ, *Mal. iii. 16, 17.* “Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.” And the tongue, which did run at random, shall then confess to God: and the speaker shall find it to have been followed, and every word noted that dropped from his unsanctified lips. “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” *Matth. xii. 36.* And if they shall give account of idle words, that is, words spoken to no good purpose, neither to God’s glory, one’s own, or one’s neighbour’s good; how



much more shall mens wicked words, their sinful oaths, curses, lies, filthy communications, and bitter words, be called over again that day? The tongues of many shall then fall upon themselves, and ruin them. *Thirdly*, Mens thoughts shall be brought into judgment; the judge will make manifest the counsel of the hearts, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Thoughts go free from man's judgment, but not from the judgment of the heart-searching God, who knows mens thoughts, without the help of signs to discern them by. The secret springs of mens actions, will then be brought to light; and the sins, that never came further than the heart, will then be laid open. O what a figure will man's corrupt nature make, when his inside is turned out, and all his speculative impurities are exposed! the rottenness that is within many a whited sepulchre, the speculative filthiness and wantonness, murder and malignity, now lurking in the hearts of men, as in the chamber of imagery, will then be discovered; and what good was in the hearts of any, shall no more lie concealed. If it was in their hearts to build a house to the Lord, they shall hear, that they did well that it was in their heart.

This trial will be righteous and impartial, accurate and searching, clear and evident. The Judge is the righteous Judge, and he will do right to every one. He has a just balance for good and evil actions, and for honest and false hearts. The fig-leaf cover of hypocrisy will then be blown aside, and the hypocrite's nakedness will appear; as when the Lord came to judge Adam and Eve, in the cool (or, as the word is, in the *wind*) of the day, Gen. iii. 8. *The fire* (which tries things most exquisitely,) "shall try every man's work, of what sort it is," 1 Cor. iii. 13. Man's judgment is oft-times perplexed and confused; but here the whole process shall be clear and evident, as written with a sun-beam. It shall be clear to the Judge, to whom no case can be intricate; to the parties, who shall be convinced, Jude 15. And the multitudes on both sides, shall see the Judge is clear when he judgeth; for then the heavens shall declare his righteousness, in the audience of the world; and so it shall be universally known, Psal. l. 6.

On these accounts it is, that this trial is held out in the Scripture, under the notion of opening of books; and men

are said to be judged out of those things written in the books. **Rev. xx. 12.** The Judge of the world, who infallibly knoweth all things, hath no need of books to be laid before him, to prevent mistake in any point of law or fact; but the expression points at his proceeding, as most nice, accurate, just, and well-grounded, in every step of it. Now, there are four books that shall be opened in that day.

*First,* The book of God's remembrance or omniscience, **Mal. iii. 19.** This is an exact record of every man's state, thoughts, words, and deeds, good or evil: it is, as it were, a day-book, in which the Lord puts down all that passeth in mens hearts, lips, and lives: and it is a-filling up every day that one lives. In it are recorded mens sins and good works, secret and open, with all their circumstances. Here are registered all their privileges, mercies temporal and spiritual, sometime laid to their hand; the checks, admonitions, and rebukes, given by teachers, neighbours, afflictions, and mens own consciences; every thing in its due order. This book will serve only as a libel, in respect of the ungodly; but it will be for another use in respect of the godly, namely, for a memorial of their good. The opening of it, is the Judge's bringing to light what is written in it; the reading as it were, of the libel and memorial, respectively, in their hearing.

*Secondly,* The book of conscience will be opened, and shall be as a thousand witnesses to prove the fact, **Rom. ii. 15.** "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness. Conscience is a censor going with every man whithersoever he goes, taking an account of his deeds done in the body, and, as it were, noting them in a book; the which being opened, will be found a double of the former, so far as it relates to one's own state and case. Much is written in it, which cannot be read now; the writing of conscience being, in many cases, like to that which is made with the juice of lemons, not to be read, till it be held before the fire: But then men shall read it clearly and distinctly: The fire which is to try every man's work, will make the book of conscience legible in every point. Though the book be sealed now (the conscience blind, dumb and deaf) the seals will then be broken, and the book opened. There shall be no more a weak or misinformed conscience.

among those on the right hand, or these on the left. There shall not be a silent conscience, and far less a seared conscience amongst all the ungodly crew : But their consciences shall be most quick sighted, and most lively, in that day. None shall then call good evil, or evil good. Ignorance of what sin is, and what things are sins, will have no place among them : And the subtle reasonings of men, in favour of their lusts, will then be for ever baffled by their own consciences. None shall have the favour (if I may so speak) of lying under the soft cover of delusion : But they shall all be convicted by their conscience. Will they, will they, they shall look on this book, read and be confounded, and stand speechless, knowing that nothing is charged upon them by mistake ; since this is a book, which was always in their own custody. Thus shall the Judge make every man see himself in the glass of his own conscience which will make quick work.

*Thirdly,* The Book of the Law shall be opened. This book is the standard and rule, by which is known what is right, and what is wrong : as also, what sentence is to be passed accordingly, on these who are under it. As to the opening of this book, in its statutory part, which shews what is sin, and what is duty ; it falls in with the opening of the book of conscience. For conscience is set, by the sovereign Law-giver, in every man's breast, to be his private teacher, to shew him the law, and his private pastor, to make application of the same ; and at that day, it will be perfectly fit for its office ; so that the conscience, which is most stupid now, shall then read to the man, most accurate, but dreadful lectures, on the law. But what seems (mainly at least) pointed at, by the opening of this book, is the opening of that part of it, which determines the reward of mens works. Now, the law promised life, upon perfect obedience ; but none can be found on the right hand, or on the left, who will pretend to that, when once the book of conscience is opened, it threateneth death upon disobedience, and will effectually bring it upon all under its dominion. And this part of the book of the law, determining the reward of mens works, is opened only to shew what must be the portion of the ungodly, and that there they may read their sentence before it be pronounced. But it is not opened for the sentence of the saint's : for no sentence absolving a sinner, could ever be

drawn out of it. The law promiseth life, not as it is a rule of actions, but as a covenant of works : And therefore innocent man could not have demanded life upon his obedience, till the law was reduced into the form of a covenant, as was shewn before. But the saints having been in this life, brought under a new covenant, namely, the covenant of grace, were dead to the law, as a covenant of works, and it was dead to them. Wherefore, as they shall not have any fears of death from it, so they can have no hopes of life from it, since they are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. vi. 14. But, for their sentence, another book is opened ; of which in the next place.

Thus the Book of the Law is opened, for the sentence against all those on the left hand, and by it they will clearly see the justice of the judgment against them, and how the Judge proceeds therein, according to law. Nevertheless, there will be this difference, namely, that these who had only the natural law, and lived not under any special revelation, shall be judged by that law of nature they had in their hearts : Which law bears, " That they who commit such things (as they will stand convicted of) are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. But these, who had the written law, to whom the word of God came, as it has sounded in the visible church, shall be judged by that written law. So says the Apostle, Rom. ii. 12. " For as many as have sinned without (the written) law, shall perish without (the written) law : And as many as have sinned in the law (*i. e.* under the written law) shall be judged by the (written) law."

*Lastly, Another book shall be opened, which is the book of life, Rev. xx. 12. In this, the names of all the elect are written, as Christ said to his disciples, Luke x. 20.—Your names are written in heaven.* This book contains God's gracious and unchangeable purpose, to bring all the elect to eternal life ; and that, in order thereto, they be redeemed by the blood of his Son, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and raised up by him at the last day without sin. It is now lodged in the Mediator's hand, as the book of the manner of the kingdom ; and having perfected the work the Father gave them to do, he shall on the great day, produce and open the book, and present the persons therein named, faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude 24. " Not having spot or

wrinkle, or any such thing," Eph. v. 27. None of them all, who are named in the book shall be missing. They shall be found qualified, according to the order of the book, redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, raised up without spot; what remains then, but that, according to the same book they obtain the great end, namely, everlasting life. This may be gathered from that precious promise, Rev. iii. 5. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment (being raised in glory) and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, But I will confess his name (it shall be, as it were, read out amongst the rest of God's elect) before my Father, and before his angels." Here is now the ground of the saints absolution, the ground of the blessed sentence they shall receive, the book of life being opened, it will be known to all, who are elected, and who are not. Thus far of the trial of the parties.

*Eighthly*, Then shall the Judge pronounce that blessed sentence on the saints, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, Mat. xxv. 34. It is most probable, the man Christ will pronounce it with an audible voice; which not only all the saints, but all the wicked likewise, shall hear and understand. Who can conceive the inexpressible joy, with which these happy ones shall hear these words? Who can imagine that fulness of joy, which shall be poured into their hearts, with these words reaching their ears? And who can conceive how much of hell shall break into the hearts of all the ungodly crew, by these words of heaven? It is certain this sentence shall be pronounced before the sentence of damnation, Mat. xxv. 34, 41. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed, &c.—Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed," &c. There is no need of this order, that the saints may without fear or astonishment, hear the other sentence on the reprobate; they who are raised in glory, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, presented without spot, and whose souls (for the far greater part of them) have been so long in heaven before, shall not be capable of any such fear. But hereby they will be orderly brought in, to sit in judgment, as Christ's assessors, against the ungodly;

whose torment will be aggravated by it. It will be a hell to them, to be kept out of hell, till they see the doors of heaven opened to receive the saints, who once dwelt in the same country, parish, or town, and sat under the same ministry with themselves. Thus will they see heaven afar off, to make their hell the hotter. Like that unbelieving lord, 2 Kings vii. 19, 20. they shall see the plenty with their eyes, but shall not eat thereof. Every word of the blessed sentence, shall be like an envenomed arrow shot into their hearts, while they see what they have lost, and from thence gather what they are to expect.

This sentence passeth on the saints according to their works, Rev. xx. 12. But not for their works, nor for their faith neither, as if eternal life were merited by them. The sentence itself overthrows this absurd conceit. The kingdom they are called to, was prepared for them, from the foundation of the world; not left to be merited by themselves, who were but of yesterday. They inherit it as sons, but procure it not to themselves, as servants do the reward of their work. They were redeemed by the blood of Christ, and clothed with his spotless righteousness, which is the proper cause of the sentence. They were also qualified for heaven, by the sanctification of his Spirit; and hence it is according to their works: So that the ungodly world shall see now, that the Judge of the quick and dead does good to them, who were good. Therefore it is added to the sentence, "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat," Ec. ver. 35, 36. which doth not denote the ground, but the evidence of their right to heaven: As if a judge should say, he absolves a man pursued for debt, for the witnesses depone, that it is paid already. So the Apostle says, 1 Cor. x. 5. "But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Their overthrow in the wilderness was not the ground of God's displeasure with them, but it was an evidence of it. And thus our Lord teacheth us the necessary connection betwixt glory and good works, namely, works evangelically good; works having a respect to Jesus Christ, and done out of faith in him, and love to him, without which they will not be regarded in that day. And the saints will so far be judged according to such works, that the degrees of glory amongst

them shall be according to these works ; for it is an eternal truth, " He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly," 2 Cor. ix. 6.

Thus shall the good works of the godly have a glorious, not a gratuitous reward ; a reward of grace, not of debt ; which will fill them with wonder at the riches of free grace, and the Lord's condescending to take any notice, especially such public notice, of their poor worthless works. The which seems to be the import of what they are said to answer, " Saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered," &c. ver. 37, 38, 39. And may they not justly wonder, to see themselves set down to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, in consequence of a dinner or supper, a little meat or drink (such as they had) which they gave to an hungry or thirsty member of Christ, for his sake ? Oh plentiful harvest following upon the seed of good works : Rivers of pleasure springing up from (perhaps) a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple ! Eternal mansions of glory rising out of a night's lodging given to a saint, who was a stranger ! Everlasting robes of glory given in exchange of a new coat, or, it may be, an old one, bestowed on some saint, who had not necessary clothing ! A visit to a sick saint, repaid by Christ himself, coming in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels ! A visit made to a poor prisoner, for the cause of Christ, repaid with a visit from the Judge of all, taking away the visitant with him to the palace of heaven, there to be ever with himself ! These things will be matter of everlasting wonder, and should stir up all, to sow liberally in time, while the seed-time of good works doth last. But it is Christ's stamp on good works, that puts a value on them, in the eye of a gracious God ; which seems to be the import of our Lord's reply, ver. 40. " In as much as ye have done it, unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

IX. Now the saints having received their own sentence, they shall judge the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2. This was not fulfilled, when the empire became Christian, and Christians were made magistrates. No, the Psalmist tells us, " This honour have all the saints," Psal. cxlix. 9. And the Apostle in the forecited place, adds, " And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge

the smallest matters?" ver. 3. "Know ye not, that we shall judge angels?" Being called, they come to receive their kingdom, in the view of angels and men; they go as it were, from the bar to the throne, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my throne," Rev. iii. 21. They shall not only judge the world in Christ their head, by way of communion with him; by their works compared with these of the ungodly; or, by way of testimony against them: but they shall be assessors to Jesus Christ the Judge, giving their voice against them, consenting to his judgment as just, and saying, Amen, to the doom pronounced against all the ungodly; as is said of the saints, upon the judgment of the great whore, Rev. xix. 1, 2. "Hallelujah, for true and righteous are his judgments." Thus the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning of the resurrection, Psal. xlix. 14. Then, and not till then, shall that be fully accomplished, which ye may read, Psal. cxlix. 6, 7, 8, 9. "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people,—this honour have all his saints." O! what a strange turn of affairs, will appear here! what an astonishing sight will it be, to see wicked churchmen and statesmen, standing as criminals before the saints, whom sometimes they condemned as heretics, rebels and traitors! to see men of riches and power, stand pale-faced before these whom they oppressed! to see the mocker stand trembling before these whom he mocked, the worldly-wise man before these whom he accounted fools! then shall the despised faces of the saints, be dreadful faces to the wicked; and those who were sometimes the song of the drunkards, shall then be a terror to them. All wrongs must be righted at length, and every one set in his proper place.

*Tenthly*, The Judge shall pronounce the sentence of damnation on all the ungodly multitude. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," ver. 41. Fearful doom! and that from the same mouth, from whence proceed the sentence of absolution before. It was an aggravation of the misery of the Jews, when their city was destroyed, that they were ruined by



one who was accounted the darling of the world. O! what an aggravation of the misery of the wicked will it be, that he shall pronounce this sentence also! to hear the curse from mount Zion, must needs be most terrible. To be damned by him, who came to save sinners, must be double damnation. But thus it shall be. The Lamb of God shall roar, as a lion against them: he shall excommunicate, and cast them out of his presence for ever, by a sentence from the throne, saying, "Depart from me ye cursed." He shall adjudge them to everlasting fire, and the society of devils for evermore. And this sentence also we suppose, shall be pronounced with an audible voice, by the man Christ. And all the saints shall say, "Hallelujah, true and righteous are his judgments." None were so compassionate as the saints, when on earth during the time of God's patience. But now that time is at an end, their compassion on the ungodly is swallowed up in joy, in the Mediator's glory, and his executing of just judgment, by which his enemies are made his footstool. Though sometimes the righteous man did weep in secret places for their pride, and because they would not hear; yet, then, "He shall rejoice, when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked," Psal. lviii. 10. No pity shall be then shewn to them, from their nearest relations. The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the Judge, in the condemnation of her ungodly husband: the godly husband shall say, Amen, to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom: the godly parents shall say, Hallelujah, at the passing of the sentence against their ungodly child: and the godly child, shall from his heart, approve the damnation of his wicked parents, the father who begat him, and the mother who bore him. The sentence is just: they are judged "according to their works," Rev. xx. 12.

There is no wrong done them: "For I was hungry," saith our Lord, "and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not," ver. 42, 43. These are not only evidences of their ungodly and cursed state, but most proper causes and grounds of their condemnation: for though good works do not merit salvation, yet evil works

damnation. Sins of one kind only, namely, of omission are here mentioned; not that these alone shall then be discovered (for the opening of the books lay all open) because these, tho' there were no more, are sufficient to condemn unpardoned sinners. And if men shall be condemned for sins of omission, much more for sins of commission. The omission of works of charity and mercy, descended on particularly, to stop the mouths of the condemned; for it is most just, that he have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy, James ii. 13. mentioning of the omission of acts of charity and mercy towards the distressed members of Christ, intimates, that it is the judgment of those who have heard of Christ in the gospel, that is principally intended here, in this portion of scripture; and that the slighting of Christ, will be the great cause of the ruin of those who hear the gospel; the enmity of the hearts of the wicked against himself discovered by the entertainment they now give to his messengers.

vain will they say, "When saw we thee an hungered, or thirsty?" &c. ver 44. For the Lord reckons, and will reckon, the world's unkindness to his people, unkindness to himself! "In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me," ver. 45. O meat and drink, which were so happily spared, when a member of Christ was in need of it! O wretched neglect, that the stranger saint was not taken in! it had been better for them, they had sold their own room, and their own bed, than he had sold his lodging. O cursed clothing, may the wicked say, "I was in my house, locked up in my chest, or hanging in my wardrobe, and was not brought out to clothe such a one!" Oh that I had stripped myself, rather than he had been stripped away without clothing! Cursed business, that diverted me from visiting a sick saint! O that I had rather spent whole nights with him. Wretch that I was! did I sit at ease in my house, when he was in prison, and did not visit him? But now the tables are turned; Christ's servants shall eat, but I shall be hungry; his servants shall drink, but I shall be thirsty; they rejoice, but I am cast down, Isa. lxxv. 13. They are taken in, but I am cast out and bid depart; they are clothed with robes of glory, but I walk naked, and they see my shame, Rev. xvi. 15.

They are now raised up on high, beyond the reach of sickness or pain; but I must now lie down in sorrow, Isa. l. 11. Now shall they go to the palace of heaven, but I must go to the prison of hell.

But if our Lord thus resents men's neglecting to help his people under these and the like distresses; what may they expect, who are the authors and instruments of them? If they shall be fed with wrath, who fed them not, when they were hungry; what shall become of those, who robbed and spoiled them, and took their own bread away from them? What a full cup of wrath shall be the portion of those, who were so far from giving them meat or drink, when hungry or thirsty, that they made it a crime for others to entertain them, and made themselves drunken with their blood! they must lodge with devils for evermore, who took not in the Lord's people, when strangers; then, what a lodging shall those have, who drove them out of their own houses, out of their native land, and made them strangers? Men will be condemned for not clothing them when naked; then, how heavy must the sentence of those be, who have stripped them, and made them go without clothing? Surely, if not visiting of them in sickness, or in a prison, shall be so severely punished; they shall not escape a most heavy doom, who have cast them into prisons, and have them put under such hardships, as have impaired their health, brought sickness on them, and cut their days in prison, or out of prison.

To put a face upon such wicked practices, men will pretend to retain an honour for Christ and religion, while they thus treat his members, walking in his ways, and keeping the truth. They are here represented to say, "When saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" ver. 44. As if they should say, Our bread, drink, lodging, clothing, and visits, were indeed refused, but not to Christ; but to a set of men, of a bad character; men who turned the world upside down, (Acts xvii. 6.) who troubled Israel, (2 Kings xviii. 17.) an humorous and fantastic sort of people, having laws diverse from all people; factious and rebellious (they did not keep the king's laws) and therefore a very dangerous set of men; it was not for the king's profit to suffer them, Esther iii. 8. But although men

iniquity upon the ungodly, and give them ill names, they may treat them as criminals ; all these pretences avail them nothing ; in the great day, before the righteous judge, nor before their own consciences neither ; but equal ground of their enmity against the saints, will be, (to their own conviction) to be their enmity against himself. This seems to be the import of the object of the damned, (ver. 44. and of the answer to it, ver.

“ In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of us, ye did it not to me.”

Lastly, Sentence being past on both parties, follows the execution of the same, ver. 46. “ And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal.” The damned shall get no reprieve, but go to their place without delay ; they shall be driven away from the judgment-seat into hell ; and the saints shall enter into the king’s palace, (Psal. xlv. 15.) namely, into the seat of the blessed. But our Lord Christ, and his glorious company, shall keep the field that day, and the backs of all their enemies : for the damned go first.

This day of the Lord, the great day, shall be the general conflagration, by which those visible heavens, the earth and sea shall pass away. Not that they shall be annihilated (or reduced to nothing), that is not the operation of the day ; but they shall be dissolved, and purged by that fire from all the effects of sin, or of the curse, upon them ; then renewed, and made glorious and stable. Of this regeneration, the Apostle Peter speaks, 2 Pet. iii. 10. At the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat : the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt.

See also ver. 7, 12. And of the renewing of the world, he adds, ver. 13. “ Nevertheless we, according to his promise look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

This seems most agreeable to the Scriptures, and to the nature of the thing, to conceive this conflagration to follow after the general judgment ; sentence being past on both parties before it. And I judge it probable, that it shall fall in with the putting of the sentence in execution.

against the damned ; so as they shall (according to their sentence) depart, and the heavens and the earth pass away together and at once, at that furious rebuke from the throne, driving away the damned out of the world (in this fire) to the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Even as, in the deluge, with which the Apostle Peter compares the conflagration or burning of the world, (2 Pct. iii. 6, 7.) the world itself, and the wicked upon it, perished together ; the same water which destroyed the earth, sweeping away the inhabitants. For it is not likely, that the wicked shall at all stand on the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, 2 Pct. iii. 13. and as for this earth, it shall flee away, (which seems to denote a very quick dispatch) and it shall flee from his face, who sits on the throne, Rev. xx. 11. " And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the heavens and the earth fled away." The execution of the sentence on the wicked, is also thus expressed : They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence, or from the face of the Lord, 2 Thess. i. 9. The original word is the same in both texts, the which being compared, seem to say, that these creatures being abused by the wicked, being left to stand, as witnesses against them in the judgment, are, after sentence past on their abusers, made to pass away with them from the face of the judge. It is true, the fleeing away of the earth and heaven is narrated, Rev. xx. 11. before the judgment ; but that will not prove its going before the judgment, more than the narrating of the judgment, ver. 12. before the resurrection, ver. 13. will prove the judgment to be before it. Further, it is remarkable, in the execution of the sentence, Rev. xx. 14, 15. that not only the reprobate are cast into the lake, but death and hell are cast into it likewise ; all effects of sin, and of the curse, are removed out of the world (for which very cause shall the conflagration be) and they are confined to the place of the damned. Besides all this, it is evident the end of the world is by the conflagration ; and the Apostle tells us, (1 Cor. xv. 24, 35.) that " then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father : when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." The which last

as it must be done before the end ; so it seems not to be done, but by putting the sentence in execution, past in the day of judgment, against the wicked.

Now, if the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, that are set forth for an example, (Jude 7,) was so dreadful ; how terrible will that day be, when the whole world shall be at once in flames ! how will wretched worldlings look, when their darling world shall be all set on fire ? Then shall strong castles, and towering palaces, with all their rich furniture, go up together in one flame with the lowest cottages. What heart can fully conceive the terror of that day to the wicked, when the whole fabric of heaven and earth, shall at once be dissolved by that fire ! when that miserable company shall be driven from the tribunal to the pit, with fire within them, and fire without them ; and fire behind them, and on every hand of them ; and fire before them, awaiting them in the lake, whether this fire (for ought appears) may follow them !

As for the particular place of this judgment, though some point us to the valley of Jehoshaphat for it, yet our Lord, who knew it, being asked the question by his disciples, " Where Lord ? " told them only, " Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together," Luke xvii. 37. After which answer, it is too much for men to renew the question. As for the time when it shall be ; in vain do men search for what the Lord has purposely kept secret, Acts i. 8. " It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power." The Apostle Paul, after having very plainly described the second coming of Christ, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. adds, (chap. v. 2.) " But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh, as a thief in the night." Nevertheless, some in several ages, have made very bold with the time ; and several particular years, which are now past, have been given out to the world, for the time of the end, by men who have pried into the secrets of God. Time has proclaimed to the world their rashness and folly ; and it is likely, they will be no more happy in their conjectures, whose determinate time is yet to come. Let us rest in that he cometh. God hath kept the day hid from us, that we may be every day rea-

dy for it; Matth. xxv. 13. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh." And let us remember, that the last day of our life will determine our state, in the last day of the world; and as we die, so shall we be judged.

I shall now shut up this subject, with some application of what has been said.

USE I. Of comfort to all the saints. Here is abundance of consolation to all who are in the state of grace. What ever be your afflictions in the world, this day will make up all your losses. "Though ye have lain among the pots, ye shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers of yellow gold," Psalm lxxviii. 13. Though the world reproach, judge and condemn you, the Judge will at that day absolve you, and bring forth your righteousness as the light. The world's fools, will then appear to have been the only wise men that were in it. Though the cross be heavy, you may well bear it in expectation of the crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge will then give you. If the world do despise you, and treat you with the utmost contempt, regard it not; the day cometh wherein you shall sit with Christ on his throne. Be not discouraged, by reason of manifold temptations: but resist the devil, in confidence of a full and complete victory; for you shall judge the tempter at last. Though you have had wrestling now with the body of sin and death; yet ye shall get all your enemies under your feet at length, and be presented faultless before the presence of his glory. Let not the terror of that day dispirit you, when you think upon it; let these, who have slighted the Judge, and continue enemies to him, and to the way of holiness, droop and hang down their heads when they think of his coming; but lift ye up your heads with joy, for the last day will be your best day. The Judge is your Head and Husband, your Redeemer, and your Advocate. Ye must appear before the judgment-seat, but ye shall not come into condemnation, John v. 24. His coming will not be against you, but for you. He came in the flesh, to remove the lawful impediments of the spiritual marriage, by his death; he came in the gospel to you, to espouse you to himself; he will come, at the last day, to solemnize the marriage, and take

the bride home to his Father's house. "Even so come Lord Jesus."

**USE II.** Of Terror to all unbelievers. This may serve to awaken a secure generation, a world lying in wickedness, as if they were never to be called to an account for it; and slighting the Mediator as if he were not to judge them. Ah! how few have the lively impressions of the judgment to come! Most men live, as if what is said of it, from the word, were but idle tales. The profane lives of many, speak the thoughts of it to be far from their hearts, and in very deed makes a mock of it before the world, saying in effect, Where is the promise of his coming? The hypocrisy of others, who blind the eyes of the world with a splendid profession, being in appearance Christ's sheep, while they are indeed the devil's goats, is an evidence, that the great separation of the sheep from the goats, is very little laid to heart. How do many indulge in secret wickedness, of which they would be ashamed before witnesses; not considering that their most secret thoughts and actions will, at that day, be discovered, before the great congregation! How eagerly are men hearts set on the world, as if it were to be their everlasting habitation! The solemn assemblies, and public ordinances, wherein the Judge is upon a transaction of peace with the criminals are undervalued; mens hearts will swim like feathers in the waters of the sanctuary, that will sink, like stones, to the bottom, in cares of this life: They will be very serious in trifles of this world, and trifle in the most serious and weighty things of another world. But O! consider the day that is approaching, in which Christ shall come to judgment; the world shall be summoned, by the sound of the last trumpet, to compear before his tribunal. The Judge shall sit on his throne, and all nations shall be sisted before him; the separation shall be made betwixt the godly and the wicked, the books opened, and the dead judged out of them; one party shall be adjudged to everlasting life, and the other to everlasting fire, according to their works.

It would be a sight of admirable curiosity, if thou couldst wrap up thyself in some dark cloud, or hide thyself in the cleft of some high rock, from whence thou mightest espy wicked kings, princes, judges, and great



ones of the earth, rising out of their marble tombs, and brought to the bar, to answer for all their cruelty, injustice, oppression, and profanity, without any marks of distinction, but what their wickedness puts upon them : Profane, unholy and unfaithful churchmen, pursued with the curses of the ruined people, from their graves to the judgment-seat, and charged with the blood of souls, to whom they gave no faithful warning : Mighty men standing trembling before the Judge, unable to recover their wonted boldness, to out-wit him with their subtilties, or defend themselves by their strength : Delicate women cast forth of their graves, as abominable branches, dragged to the tribunal, to answer for their ungodly lives : The ignorant, suddenly taught in the law, to their cost ; and the learned declared, before the world, fools and laborious triflers ; the atheist convinced, the hypocrite unmasked ; and the profane, at long run, turned serious about his eternal state : Secret murders, adulteries, thefts, cheats, and other works of darkness, which scorned all human search, discovered and laid open before the world, with their most minute circumstances : No regard had to the rich, no pity shewn to the poor : The scales of the world turned ; oppressed and despised piety set on high ; and prosperous wickedness at last brought low : All, not found in Christ, arraigned, convicted, and condemned without respect of persons, and driven from the tribunal to the pit ; while these found in him, at that day, being absolved before the world, go with him into heaven. Nay, but thou canst not so escape. Thyself, whosoever thou art, not being in Christ, must bear a part in this tragical and frightful action.

Sinner, that same Lord Christ, whom thou now despisest, whom thou woundest through the sides of his messengers, and before whom thou dost prefer thy lusts, will be thy Judge. And a neglected Saviour will be a severe Judge. O ! what mountain, what rock wilt thou get to fall on thee, and hide thee from the face of him that sitteth on the throne ? Thou hast now a rock within thee, a heart of adamant, so that thou canst count the darts of the world as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of the spear : But that rock will rent, at the sight of the Judge ; that hard heart will then break, and thou shalt weep and wail,

when weeping and wailing will be to no purpose. Deaths bands will fall off; the grave will vomit thee out; and the rocks refuse to grind thee to powder. How will these cursed eyes abide the sight of the Judge! Behold he cometh! Where is the profane swearer, who tore his wounds? the wretched worldling, now abandoned of his God; the formal hypocrite, who kissed him, and betrayed him? the despiser of the gospel, who sent him away in his messengers groaning, profaned his ordinances, and trampled under foot his precious blood? O murderer, the slain Man is thy Judge! There is he whom thou didst so maltreat! Behold the neglected Lamb of God, appearing as a lion against thee! How will thine heart endure the darts of his fiery looks! That rocky heart now kept out against him, shall then be blown up! That face, which refuseth to blush now, shall then gather blackness! arrows of wrath shall pierce, where arrows of conviction cannot enter now. What will thou answer him, when he riseth up, and chargeth thy unbelief and impenitency? Wilt thou say, thou was not warned? Conscience within thee, will give thee the lie: The secret groans and weariness of those who warned thee, will witness the contrary. If a child or fool did tell you your house were on fire, you would immediately run to quench it; but in matters of eternal concern, men will first fill their hearts with prejudices against the messengers, and then cast their message behind their backs. But these silly shifts and pretences will not avail, in the day of the Lord. How will these cursed ears, now deaf to the call of the gospel, inviting sinners to come to Christ, hear the fearful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" No sleepy hearer shall be there: No man's heart will then wander: Their hearts and eyes will then be fixed on their misery, which they will not believe. O that we knew in this our day, the things that belong to our peace.

*Lastly*, Be exhorted to believe this great truth; and believe it so, as you may prepare for its judgment betimes. Set up a secret tribunal in your own breasts, and often call yourselves to an account there. Make the Judge your friend in time, by closing with him in the offer of the gospel; and give all diligence, that ye may be found in

Christ at that day. Cast off the works of darkness, and live, as believing you are, at all times, and in all places, under the eye of your Judge, who will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing. Be fruitful in good works, knowing that as ye sow, ye shall reap. Study piety towards God, righteousness and charity towards men. Lay up in store plenty of works of charity and mercy, towards them who are in distress, especially such as are of the household of faith, that they may be produced that day as evidences, that ye belong to Christ. Shut not up your bowels of mercy, now, towards the needy; lest ye, then, find no mercy. Take heed, that in all your works, ye be single and sincere; aiming, in them all, at the glory of your Lord, a testimony of your love to him, and obedience to his command. Leave it to hypocrites, who have their reward, to proclaim every man his own goodness, and to sound a trumpet, when they do their alms. It is a base and unchristian spirit, which cannot have satisfaction in a good work, unless it be exposed to the view of others; it is utterly unworthy of one who believes that the last trumpet shall call together the whole world; before whom the Judge himself shall publish works truly good, how secretly soever they were done. Live in a believing expectation of the coming of the Lord. Let your loins be always girt and your lamps burning; so when he comes, whether in the last day of your life, or in the last day of the world, ye shall be able to say with joy, *Lo, this is our God, and we have waited for him.*

# HEAD V.

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

MAT. XXV. 34.

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

**H**AVING, from this portion of Scripture, which the text is a part of, discoursed of the general judgment; and being to speak of the everlasting happiness of the saints, and the everlasting misery of the wicked, from the respective sentences to be pronounced upon them in the great day; I shall take them in the order wherein they lie before us; the rather, that a sentence is first past upon the righteous, so the execution thereof is first begun, though possibly the other may be fully executed before it be completed.

The words of the text contain the joyful sentence itself, together with an historical introduction thereto, which gives us an account of the Judge pronouncing the sentence; the King, Jesus Christ; the parties on whom it is given, *them on his right hand*; and the time when, *then*, as soon as the trial is over. Of these I have spoken already. It is the sentence itself we are now to consider, *Come ye blessed of my Father*, &c. Stand a-back, O ye profane goats; have away all unregenerate souls, not united to Jesus Christ; this is not for you. Come, O ye saints, brought out of your natural state, into the state of grace; behold here the state of glory awaiting you. Here is glory let down to us in words and syllables; a looking-glass, in which you may see your everlasting happiness; a scheme

(or draught) of Christ's Father's house, wherein there are many mansions.

This glorious sentence bears two things. (1.) The complete happiness to which the saints are adjudged, *the kingdom*. (2.) Their solemn admission to it, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit," &c. *First*, their complete happiness is a kingdom. A kingdom is the top of worldly felicity; there is nothing on earth greater than a kingdom; therefore the hidden weight of glory in heaven, is held forth to us under that notion. But it is not an ordinary kingdom, it is *the kingdom*; the kingdom of heaven, surpassing all the kingdoms of the earth in glory, honour, profit and pleasure, infinitely more than they do in these excel the low and inglorious condition of a beggar in rags and on a dunghill. *Secondly*, There is a solemn admission of the saints into this their kingdom, "Come ye, inherit the kingdom." In the view of angels, men and devils, they are invested with royalty, and solemnly inaugurated before the whole world, by Jesus Christ the heir of all things, who hath all power in heaven and in earth. Their right to the kingdom is solemnly recognized and owned! They are admitted to it, as undoubted heirs of the kingdom, to possess it by inheritance or lot, as the word properly signifies; because of old, inheritances were designed by lot, as Canaan to Israel, God's first-born, as they are called, Exod. iv. 22. And because this kingdom is the Father's kingdom, therefore they are openly acknowledged in their admission to it, to be the blessed of Christ's Father; the which blessing was given them long before this sentence, but is now solemnly recognized and confirmed to them by the Mediator, in his Father's name. It is observable, he says not, Ye blessed of *the* Father; but, Ye blessed of *my* Father; to shew us, that all blessings are derived upon us from the Father, the fountain of blessing, as he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we are blessed, Eph. i. 3. And finally they are admitted to this kingdom, as that which was prepared for them, from the foundation of the world, in God's eternal purpose, before they, or any of them were; that all the world may see eternal life to be the free gift of God.

DOCTRINE.

*The Saints shall be made completely happy, in the Possession of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Two things I shall here enquire into, (1.) The nature of this kingdom. (2.) The admission of the saints thereto. And then I shall make a practical improvement of the whole.

FIRST, As to the nature of the kingdom of heaven, our knowledge of it is very imperfect: for, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9. As, by familiar resemblances, parents instruct their little children concerning things, of which otherwise they can have no tolerable notion; so our gracious God, in contemplation of our weakness, is pleased to represent to us heaven's happiness, under similitudes taken from earthly things, glorious in the eyes of men; since naked discoveries of the heavenly glory, divested of earthly resemblances, would be too bright for our weak eyes, and in them we would but lose ourselves. Wherefore now, one can but speak as a child of these things, which the day will fully discover.

The state of glory is represented under the notion of a *kingdom*; a kingdom among men, being that in which the greatest number of earthly good things doth concenter. Now every saint shall, as a king, inherit a kingdom. All Christ's subjects shall be kings, each one with his crown upon his head: not that the great King shall divest himself of his royalty, but he will make all his children partakers of his kingdom.

I. The saints shall have kingly power and authority given. Our Lord gives not empty titles to his favourites; he makes them kings indeed. The dominion of the saints will be a dominion far exceeding that of the greatest monarch ever was on earth. They will be absolute masters over sin, that sometime had dominion over them. They will have a complete rule over their own spirits; an entire management of all their affections and inclinations, which now create them so much molestation: the turbulent root of corrupt affections, shall be for ever expelled out of that kingdom, and never be able any more.

to give them the least disturbance. They shall have power over the nations, the ungodly of all nations, and shall rule them with a rod of iron, Rev. ii. 26, 27. The whole world of the wicked shall be broken before them: Satan shall be bruised under their feet, Rom. xvi. 20. He shall never be able to fasten a temptation on them any more; but he will be judged by them; and in their sight cast, with the reprobate crew, into the lake of fire and brimstone. So shall they rule over their oppressors. Having fought the good fight, and got the victory, Christ will entertain them as Joshua did his captains, causing them come near, and put their feet upon the necks of kings, Josh. x. 24.

II. They shall have the Ensigns of Royalty. For a throne, Christ will grant them to sit with him on his throne, Rev. iii. 12. They will be advanced to the highest honour and dignity they are capable of; and, in the enjoyment of it, they will have an eternal undisturbed repose, after all the tossings they meet with in the world, in their way to the throne. For a crown, they shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. Not a crown of flowers, as subjects, being conquerors, or victors, sometimes have got; such a crown quickly fades; but their crown never fadeth. Not a crown of gold, such as earthly kings do wear; even a crown of gold is often stained, and can never make them happy who wear it. But it shall be a crown of glory. A crown of glory is a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10. that life which knows no end; a crown which death can never make to fall off one's head. It must be an abiding crown; for it is a crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. iv. 8. It was purchased for them by Christ's righteousness, which is imputed to them; they are qualified for it by inherent righteousness; God's righteousness or faithfulness secures it to them. They shall have a sceptre, a rod of iron (Rev. ii. 27.) terrible to all the wicked world. And a sword too, a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the people, Psal. cxlix. 6, 7. They shall have royal apparel. The royal robes in this kingdom are white robes, Rev. iii. 4. "They shall walk with me in white." And these last do, in a very particular manner, point at the inconceivable glory of the state of the saints in heaven.

The Lord is pleased often to represent unto us the glorious state of the saints, under the notion of their being clothed in white garments. It is promised to the overcomer, that he shall be clothed in white raiment, Rev. iii. The elders about the throne are clothed in white raiment, Rev. iv. 4. The multitude before the throne are clothed in white robes, chap. vii. 9. arrayed in white robes, ver. 14. made white in the blood of the Lamb, ver. 14. I own last two testimonies adduced, do respect the state of saints on earth; but withal the terms are borrowed from the state of the church in heaven. All garments, properly so called, being badges of sin and shame, shall be laid aside by the saints, when they come to their state of glory. But if we consider on what occasions white garments were wont to be put on, we shall find much of reason under them.

First, The Romans, when they manumitted their bond-slaves, gave them a white garment, as a badge of their freedom. So shall the saints that day get on white robes; it is the day of the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. viii. 21.) the day of the redemption of their bodies, ver. 23. They shall no more see the house of bondage, nor lie any more among the pots. If we compare the state of the saints on earth, with that of the redeemed, it is indeed a state of freedom; whereas the state of the unregenerate is a state of slavery: but in comparison with their state in heaven, it is but a servitude. A saint on earth is compared to a young prince, and heir to the crown; but his duty may be, *I serve*, for he differeth nothing from a slave, though he be Lord of all, Gal. iv. 1. What are the groans of a saint, the sordid and base work he is sometimes found employed in, the black and tattered garments he talks in, but badges of this comparative servitude?

From the day the saints come to the crown, they receive their complete freedom, and serve no more. They shall be fully freed from sin, which of all evils is the worst, both in itself, and in their apprehensions too: how great then must that freedom be, when these Egyptians whom they see to-day, they shall see them again no more for ever? They shall be free from all temptation to sin. Satan can have no access to tempt them any more, neither by himself, nor by his agents. A full answer will then be



given to that petition they have so often repeated, *Lead us not into temptation.* No hissing serpent can come into the paradise above; no snare nor trap can be laid there, to catch the feet of the saints; they may walk there fearlessly, for they can be in no hazard, there are no lions den, no mountains of the leopards, there. They shall be set beyond the possibility of sinning, for they shall be confirmed in goodness. It will be the consummate freedom of their will to be for ever unalterably determined to good. And they shall be freed from all the effects of sin: "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain," Rev. xxi. 4. What kingdom is like unto this? Death makes its way now into a palace, as easily as into a cottage! sorrow fills the heart of one, who wears a crown on his head: royal robes are no fence against pain, and crying by reason of pain. But in this kingdom no misery can have place. All reproaches shall be wiped off; and never shall a tear drop any more from their eyes. They shall not complain of desertions again; the Lord will never hide his face from them: but the Sun of righteousness shining upon them in his meridian brightness, will dispel all clouds, and give them an everlasting day, without the least mixture of darkness. A deluge of wrath, after a fearful thunder-clap from the throne, will sweep away the wicked from before the judgment-seat, into the lake of fire; but they are, in the first place, like Noah brought into the ark, and out of harm's way.

*Secondly,* White raiment hath been a token of purity. Therefore the Lamb's wife is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, Rev. xix. 8. And those who stood before the throne, washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, chap. vii. 14. The saints shall then put on the robes of perfect purity, and shine in spotless holiness, like the sun in his strength, without the least cloud to intercept his light. Absolute innocence shall then be restored, and every appearance of sin banished far from his kingdom. The guilt of sin, and the reigning power of it, are now taken away in the saints; nevertheless sin dwelleth in them, Rom. vii. 20. But then it shall be no more in them; the corrupt nature will be quite removed; that root of bitterness will be plucked

up, and no vestiges of it left in their souls ; their nature shall be altogether pure and sinless. There shall be no more darkness in their minds ; but the understanding of every saint, when he is come to his kingdom, will be as a globe of pure and unmixed light. There shall not be the least aversion to good, or inclination to evil, in their wills ; but they will be brought to a perfect conformity to the will of God, blessed with angelical purity, and fixed therein. Their affections shall not be liable to the least disorder or irregularity ; it will cost them no trouble to keep them right ; they will get such a set of purity, as they can never lose. They will be so refined from all earthly dross, as never to savour more of any thing but heaven. Were it possible they should be set again amidst the ensnaring objects of an evil world, they should walk among them without the least defilement ; as the sun shines on the dunghill yet untainted, and as the angels preserved their purity in the midst of Sodom. Their graces shall then be perfected, and all the imperfections now cleaving to them, done away. There will be no more ground for complaints of weakness of grace ; none in that kingdom shall complain of an ill heart or a corrupt nature. " It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but—when he shall appear, we shall be like him," 1 John iii. 2.

*Thirdly*, Among the Jews, these who desired to be admitted into the priestly office, being tried, and found to be of the priest's line, and without blemish, were clothed in white, and enrolled among the priests. This seems to be alluded to, Rev iii. 5. " He that overcometh—the saints shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." The saints are not kings only, but priests also ; for they are a Royal Priesthood, 1 Pet ii. 9. They will be priests upon their thrones. They are judicially found descended from the great High Priest of their profession, begotten of him by his Spirit, of the incorruptible seed of the word, and without blemish ; so the trial being over, they are admitted to be priests in the temple above, that they may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. There is nothing on earth more glorious than a kingdom, nothing more venerable than the priesthood ; and both meet together in the glorified state of the saints. The general assembly of the first-born, (Heb. xii.

23.) whose is the priesthood and the double portion, appearing in their white robes of glory, will be a reverend and glorious company. That day will shew them to be the persons, whom the Lord has chosen out of all the tribes of the earth, to be near unto him, and to enter into his temple, even into his holy place. Their priesthood, begun on earth, shall be brought to its perfection, while they shall be employed in offering the sacrifice of praise to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever. They got not their portion in the earth with the rest of the tribes; but the Lord himself was their portion, and will be their double portion, through the ages of eternity.

*Fourthly,* They were wont to wear white raiment, in a time of triumph; to the which also there seems to be an allusion, Rev. iii. 5. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." And what is heaven but an everlasting triumph! None get thither, but such as fight, and overcome too. Though Canaan was given to the Israelites, as an inheritance, they behoved to conquer it, ere they could be possessors of it. The saints in this world, are in the field of battle; often in red garments, garments rolled in blood; but the day approacheth, in which they shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, (Rev. vii. 9.) having obtained a complete victory over all their enemies. The palm was used as a sign of victory; because that tree, oppressed with weights, yielded not, but rather shooteth upwards, and palm trees were carved on the doors of the most holy place, (1 Kings vi. 32) which was a special type of heaven; for heaven is the place which the saints are received into, as conquerors.

Behold the joy and peace of the saints in their white robes! The joy arising from the view of past dangers, and of riches and honours gained at the very door of death, do most sensibly touch one's heart; and this will be an ingredient in the everlasting happiness of the saints, which could have had no place in the heaven of innocent Adam, and his sinless offspring, supposing him to have stood. Surely the glorified saints will not forget the entertainment they met with in the world: it will be for the glory of God to remember it, and also for the heightening of their joy. The Sicilian king, by birth the son of a potter,

acted a wise part, in that he would be served at his table, with earthen vessels, the which could not but put an additional sweetness in his meals, not to be relished by one born heir to the crown. Can ever meat be so sweet to any, as to the hungry man? Or can any have such a relish of plenty, as he who has been under pinching straits: The more difficulties the saints have passed through in their way to heaven, the place will be the sweeter to them, when they come at it. Every happy stroke struck in the spiritual warfare, will be a jewel in their crown of glory. Each victory obtained against sin, Satan, and the world, will raise their triumphant joy the higher. The remembrance of the cross will sweeten the crown; and the memory of their travel through the wilderness, will put an additional verdure on the fields of glory, while they walk through them, minding the day, when they went mourning without the sun.

And now that they appear triumphing in white robes, it is a sign that they have obtained an honourable peace; such a peace as their enemies can disturb no more. So every thing peculiarly adapted to their militant condition is laid aside. The sword is laid down; and they betake themselves to the pen of a ready writer, to commemorate the praises of him by whom they overcame. Public ordinances, preaching, sacraments, shall be honourably laid aside; there is no temple there, Rev. xix. 22. Sometimes these were sweet to them; but the travellers being all got home, the inns appointed for their entertainment by the way, are shut up; the candles are put out when the sun is risen; and the tabernacle used in the wilderness is folded up when the temple of glory is come in its room. Many of the saints duties will then be laid aside; as one gives his staff out of his hand when he is come to the end of his journey. Praying shall then be turned to praising; and, there being no sin to confess, no wants to seek the supply of, confession and petition shall be swallowed in everlasting thanksgiving. There will be no mourning in heaven; they have sown in tears, the reaping time of joy is come, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, Rev. xxi. 4. No need of mortification there; and self-examination is then at an end. They will not need to watch any more, the danger is over. Patience has had its perfect

work, and there is no use for it there. Faith is turned into sight, and hope is swallowed up in the ocean of sensible and full enjoyment. All the rebels are subdued, the saints quietly set on their throne; and so the forces needful in the time of the spiritual warfare, are disbanded; and they carry on their triumph in profoundest peace.

*Lastly.* White Garments were worn on festival days, in token of joy. And so shall the saints be clothed in white raiment, for they shall keep an everlasting Sabbath to the Lord, Heb. iv. 9. "There remaineth therefore a rest (or keeping of a Sabbath) to the people of God." The Sabbath, in the esteem of saints, is the queen of days: and they shall have an endless *Sabbatism* in the kingdom of heaven; so shall their garments be always white. They will have an eternal rest, with an uninterrupted joy; for heaven is not a resting place, where men may sleep out an eternity (there they rest not day nor night); but their work is their rest and continual recreation, and toil and weariness have no place there. They rest there in God, who is the centre of their souls. Here they find the complement, or satisfaction of all their desires; having the full enjoyment of God, and uninterrupted communion with him. This is the point unto the which, till the soul come, it will always be restless; but, that point reached, it rests; for he is the last end, and the soul can go no farther. It cannot understand, will, nor desire more; but in him it has what is commensurable to its boundless desires. This is the happy end of all the labours of the saints; their toil and sorrows issue in a joyful rest. The Chaldeans measuring the natural day, put the day first, and the night last: but the Jews counted the night first and the day last. Even so the wicked begin with a day of rest and pleasure, but end with a night of everlasting toil and sorrow: but God's people have their gloomy night first, and then comes their day of eternal rest. The which, Abraham, in the parable, observed to the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 25. "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

III. If one enquires where the kingdom of the saints lies? It is not in this world; it lies in a better country, that is, an heavenly, Heb. xi. 16. a country better than

the best of this world, namely, the heavenly Canaan, Immanuel's land, where nothing is wanting to complete the happiness of the inhabitants. This is the happy country, blest with a perpetual spring, and which yieldeth all things, for necessity, conveniency and delight. There men shall eat angels food; they shall be entertained with the hidden manna (Rev. ii. 17.) without being set to the painful gathering of it: they will be fed to the full, with the product of the land falling into their mouths, without the least toil to them. That land enjoys an everlasting day, for there is no night there, Rev. xxi. 25. An eternal sunshine beautifies this better country, but there is no scorching heat there. No clouds shall be seen there for ever: yet it is not a land of drought; the trees of the Lord's planting, are set by the rivers of water, and shall never want moisture; for they will have an eternal supply of the Spirit, by Jesus Christ, from his Father. This is the country from whence our Lord came, and whither he is gone again; the country which all the holy patriarchs and prophets had their eyes upon, while on earth; and which all the saints, who have gone before us, have sought their way to; and unto which, the martyrs have joyfully swimmèd through a sea of blood. This earth is the place of the saints pilgrimage: that is their country, where they find their everlasting rest.

IV. The Royal City is that great city, the holy Jerusalem, described at large, Rev. xxi. 10, &c. (It is true, some learned divines place this city in the earth, but the particulars of the description seem to me to favour those most, who point us to the other world for it.) The saints shall reign in that city, whose wall is of jasper (ver. 16.) and the foundations of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones (ver. 19.) and the street of pure gold (ver. 21.) so that their feet shall be set on that, which the men of this world set their hearts upon. This is the city God has prepared for them, Heb. xi. 16. A city that hath foundations (ver. 10.): a continuing city (chap. xiii. 14.) which shall stand and flourish, when all the cities of the world are laid in ashes; and which shall not be moved, when the foundations of the world are overturned. It is a city that never changeth its inhabitants: none of them shall ever be removed out of it; for life and immortality

reign there, and no death can enter into it. It is blessed with a perfect and perpetual peace, and can never be in the least disturbed. Nothing from without can annoy it; the gates therefore are not shut at all by day, and there is no night there, Rev xxi. 25. There can nothing from within trouble it. No want of provision there; no scarcity; no discord amongst the inhabitants. Whatever contentions are amongst the saints now, a vestige of their former jarings shall not remain there. Love to God, and to one another, shall be perfected: and these of them who stood at great distance here, will joyfully embrace and delight in one another there.

V. The Royal Palace is Christ's Father's house; in which are many mansions, John xiv. 2. There shall the saints dwell for ever. This is the house prepared for all the heirs of glory, even these of them who dwell in the meanest cottage now, or have not where to lay their heads. As our Lord calls his saints to a kingdom, he will provide them a house suitable to the dignity he puts upon them. Heaven will be a convenient, spacious and glorious house, for those whom the King delighteth to honour. Never was a house purchased at so dear a rate as this, being the purchase of the Mediator's blood! And no less could it be afforded for to them. Never was there so much ado, to fit inhabitants for a house: The saints were, by nature, utterly unfit for this house; and human art and industry could not make them meet for it. But the Father gives the designed inhabitants to his Son, to be by him redeemed; the Son pays the price of their redemption, even his own precious blood; that, with the allowance of justice, they may have access to the house: and the Holy Spirit sanctifies them by his grace; that they may be meet to come in thither, where no unclean thing can enter. And no marvel, for it is the King's palace they enter into, Psal. xiv. 15. The house of the kingdom, where the great King keeps his court; where he has his throne, and shews forth his glory, in a singular manner, beyond what mortals can conceive.

VI. Paradise is their Palace-garden. "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," said our Saviour to the penitent thief on the cross, Luke xxiii. 43. Heaven is a Paradise for pleasure and delight; where there is both

wood and water : " A pure river, of water of life, clear as chrystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb : and of either side of the river, the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month," Rev. xxii. 1, 2. How happy might innocent Adam have been in the earthly Paradise, where there was nothing wanting for necessity nor delight ! Eden was the most pleasant spot of the uncorrupted earth, and Paradise the most pleasant spot of Eden ; but what is earth in comparison of heaven ? The glorified saints, are advanced to the heavenly Paradise. There they shall not only see, but eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God, Rev. ii. 7. They shall behold the Mediator's glory, and be satisfied with his goodness. No flaming sword will be there, to keep the way of that tree of life ; but they shall freely eat of it, and live for ever. And they shall drink of the river of pleasures (Psal. xxxvi. 8.) these sweetest and purest pleasures, the which Immanuel's land doth afford ; and shall swim in an ocean of unmixed delight for evermore.

VII. They shall have Royal Treasures, sufficient to support the dignity they are advanced unto. Since the street of the royal city is pure gold, and the twelve gates thereof are twelve pearls ; their treasure must be of that which is better than gold or pearl. It is an eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. O precious treasure ! a treasure not liable to insensible corruption, by moths or rust ; a treasure which none can steal from them, Matth. vi. 20. Never did any kingdom afford such a precious treasure, nor a treasure of such variety ; for, " He that overcometh shall inherit all things," Rev. xxi. 7. No treasures on earth are stored with all things : if they were all put together in one, there would be far more valuable things wanting in that one, than found in it. This then is the peculiar treasure of these kings, who inherit the kingdom of heaven. They shall want nothing, that may contribute to their full satisfaction. Now they are rich in hope : but then they will have their riches in hand. Now all things are theirs in respect of right : then all shall be theirs in possession. They may go for ever through Immanuel's land, and behold the glory and riches thereof, with the satisfying thought, that all they see is their own. It is a pity these



should ever be uneasy under the want of earthly good things, who may be sure, they shall inherit all things at length.

VIII. Albeit there is no material Temple therein, no mediate serving of God in the use of ordinances, as here on earth; yet, as for this kingdom, "The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it," Rev. xxi. 22. As the temple was the glory of Canaan, so will the celestial temple be the glory of heaven. The saints shall be brought in thither as a royal Priesthood, to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever: for Jesus Christ will then make every saint a pillar in the temple of God, and he shall go no more out (Rev. iii. 12.) as the Priests and Levites did in their courses go out of the material temple. There the saints shall have the cloud of glory, the divine presence, with most intimate, uninterrupted communion with God: there they shall have Jesus Christ as the true ark, wherein the fiery law shall be for ever hid from their eyes: and the mercy-seat, from which nothing shall be breathed, but everlasting peace and good will towards them: the cherubims, the society of holy angels who shall join with them in eternal admiration of the mystery of Christ, the golden candlestick, with its seven lamps; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, Rev. xxi. 23. The incense-altar, in the intercession of Christ, who ever liveth to make intercession for them, (Heb. vii. 25.) eternally exhibiting the merits of his death and sufferings, and efficaciously willing for ever, that these whom the Father hath given him, be with him; and the shew-bread table, in the perpetual feast, they shall have together, in the enjoyment of God. This leads me more particularly to consider,

IX. The society in this kingdom. What would royal power and authority, ensigns of royalty, richest treasures, and all other advantages of a kingdom avail without comfortable society? Some crowned heads have made but a sorry life through the want of it; their palaces have been but unto them as prisons, and their badges of honour, as chains on a prisoner; while hated of all, they had none they could trust in, or whom they could have comfortable fellowship with. But the chief part of heaven's happiness, lies in the blessed society the saints shall have there. For clearing of which, consider these few things:

*First*, The society of the saints, among themselves, will be no small part of heaven's happiness. The communion of saints on earth, is highly prized by all those who are travelling through the world unto Zion; and companions in sin can never have such true pleasure and delight in one another, as sometime the Lord's people have in praying together, and conversing about these things, which the world is a stranger to. Here the saints are but few in company, at best; and some of them are so posted, as they seem to themselves to dwell alone; having no access to such, as they could freely unbosom themselves to, in the matter of their spiritual case. They sigh and say, "Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits—there is no cluster to eat—the good man is perished out of the earth," Mic. vii. 1, 2. But in the general assembly of the first-born in heaven, none of all the saints, who ever were, or will be on the earth, shall be missing. They will be all of them together in one place, all possess one kingdom, and all sit down together to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Here the best of the saints want not their sinful imperfections, making their society less comfortable; but there they shall be perfect, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 27. And all natural, as well as sinful imperfections, are then done away; "They shall shine as the brightness of the firmament," Dan. xii. 3.

There we will see Adam and Eve in the heavenly paradise, freely eating of the tree of life; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the holy patriarchs, no more wandering from land to land, but come to their everlasting rest; all the prophets feeding their eyes on the glory of Him, of whose coming they prophesied; the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, sitting on their twelve thrones; all the holy martyrs in their long white robes, with their crowns on their heads; the godly kings advanced to a kingdom which cannot be moved; and them that turn many to righteousness, shining as the stars for ever and ever. There will we see our godly friends, relations and acquaintances, pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out from us. And it is more than probable, that the saints will know one another in heaven; that, at least, they will know their friends, relatives, and these they were acquainted with on

earth, and such as have been most eminent in the church; however that knowledge will be purged from all earthly thoughts and affections. This seems to be included in that perfection of happiness, to which the saints shall be advanced there. If Adam knew who and what Eve was at first sight, when the Lord God brought her to him, Gen. ii. 23, 24. why should one question, but husbands and wives, parents and children, will know each other in glory? Is the Thessalonians, converted by Paul's ministry, shall be his crown of rejoicing, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming, 1 Thess. ii. 19. why may not one conclude, that ministers shall know their people, and people their ministers in heaven? And if the disciples, on the mount of transfiguration, knew Moses and Elias, whom they had never seen before (Matth. xvii. 13) we have ground to think, we shall know them too, and such as they, when we come to heaven. The communion of saints shall be most intimate there; they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, Matth. viii. 11. Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 23. which denotes most intimate and familiar society. And though diversity of languages shall cease, (1 Cor. xiii. 8.) I make no question, but there will be an use of speech in heaven; and that the saints will glorify God in their bodies there, as well as in their spirits, speaking forth his praises with an audible voice. As for the language, we shall understand what it is, when we come thither. When Paul was caught up to the third heaven, the seat of the blessed, he heard there unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, 2 Cor. xii. 4. Moses and Elias, on the mount with Christ, talked with him, Matth. xvii. 3. and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, Luke ix. 31.

Secondly, The saints will have the society of all the holy angels there. An innumerable company of angels shall be companions to them in their glorified state. Happy were the shepherds who heard the song of the heavenly host, when Christ was born; but thrice happy they, who shall join their voices with theirs, in the choir of saints and angels in heaven, when he shall be glorified there, who shall be about him there. Then shall we be

ht acquainted with the blessed spirits, who never  
 d. How bright will these morning-stars shine in  
 oly place ! they were ministering spirits to the heirs  
 vation, loved them for their Lord and Master's sake ;  
 aped round about them, to preserve them from dan-  
 how joyfully will they welcome them to their ever-  
 g habitations ; and rejoice to see them come at length  
 ir kingdom, as the tutor doth in the prosperity of  
 pupils ! The saints shall be no more afraid of them,  
 netime they were wont to be ; they shall then have  
 ff mortality, and infirmities of the flesh, and be them-  
 s, as the angels of God, fit to entertain communion  
 ellowship with these shining ones. And both being  
 ght under one head, the Lord Jesus Christ ; they join  
 : praises of God, and of the Lamb, " Saying, with a  
 voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," &c.  
 v. 11, 12. Whether the angels shall (as some  
 ) assume airy bodies, that they may be seen by the  
 r eyes of the saints, and be in nearer capacity to con-  
 -work with them, I know not ; but as they want not ways of  
 -rise amongst themselves, we have reason to think,  
 onversation betwixt them and the saints, shall not be  
 er blocked up.

stly, They shall have society with the Lord him-  
 in heaven, glorious communion with God and  
 t, which is the perfection of happiness. I chuse  
 ak of communion with God, and the man Christ-  
 aer ; because as we derive our grace from the  
 , so we will derive our glory from him too ; the  
 Christ being (if I may be allowed the expression)  
 entre of the divine glory in heaven, from whence it  
 'used unto all the saints. This seems to be taught  
 these scriptures, which express heaven's happiness  
 ing with Christ. Luke xxiii. 43. " This day shalt  
 be with me in paradise." John xxvii. 24. " Father,  
 that these also, whom thou hast given me, be with  
 (And remarkable to this purpose is what follows,  
*hey may behold my glory.*) 1 Thess. iv. 17. " So  
 we ever be with the Lord," viz. the Lord Christ,  
 we shall meet in the air. This also seems to be  
 mport of these scriptures, wherein God and the  
 , the slain Saviour, are jointly spoken of, in the

point of the happiness of the saints in heaven, Rev. vii. 17. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Chap. xxi. 3. "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them," viz. as in a tabernacle, (so the word signifies) that is, in the flesh of Christ, (compare John i. 14. and 22.) "The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple of it." Here lie the chief happiness of the saints in heaven, that without which they could never be happy, though lodged in that glorious place, and blessed with the society of angels there. What I will venture to say of it, shall be comprised in three things.

1st, The saints in heaven shall have the glorious presence of God, and of the Lamb; "God himself shall be with them," Rev. xxi. 3. and they shall be ever with the Lord. God is every where present, in respect of his essence; the saints militant have his special gracious presence: but in heaven they have his glorious presence. There they are brought near to the throne of the great King, and stand before him, where he shews his inconceivable glory. There they have the tabernacle of God, on which the cloud of glory rests, the all-glorious human nature of Christ, wherein the fulness of the Godhead dwells, not veiled as in the days of his humiliation, but shining through that blessed flesh (that all the saints may behold his glory) and making that body more glorious than a thousand suns; so that the city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, but the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is *the light thereof*, (properly, *the candle thereof*) Rev. xxi. 23. *i. e.* The Lamb is the luminary, or luminous body, which gives light to the city, as the sun and moon now give light to the world, or as a candle lightens a dark room; and the light proceeding from that glorious luminary, for the city is the glory of God. Sometime that candle burnt very dim, it was hid under a bushel, in the time of his humiliation; but that, now and then, it darted out some rays of this light, which dazzled the eyes of the spectators; but now it is set on high, in the city of God, where it shines, and shall shine for ever, in perfection of glory. It was sometimes laid aside, as a stone disallowed

of the builders ; but now it is, and for ever will be, the light or luminary of that city ; and that, like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal, ver. 11.

Who can conceive the happiness of the saints, in the presence-chamber of the great King, where he sits in his chair of state, making his glory eminently to appear in the man Christ ? His gracious presence makes a mighty change upon the saints in this world ; his glorious presence in heaven then must needs screw up their graces to their perfection, and elevate their capacities. The saints do experience, that the presence of God now with them in his grace, can make a little heaven of a sort of hell ; how great then must the glory of heaven be, by his presence there in his glory ! If a candle, in some sort, beautifies a cottage or prison, how will the shining sun beautify a palace or paradise ! The gracious presence of God made a wilderness lightsome to Moses, the valley of the shadow of death to David, a fiery furnace to the three children : What a ravishing beauty shall then arise from the sun of righteousness, shining in his meridian brightness, on the street of the city laid with pure gold ? The glorious presence of God in heaven, will put a glory on the saints themselves. The pleasant garden hath no beauty, when the darkness of the night sits down on it ; but the shining sun puts a glory on the blackest mountains ; so these who are now as bottles in the smoke, when set in the glorious presence of God, will be glorious both in soul and body.

2dly, The saints in heaven shall have the full enjoyment of God and of the Lamb. This is it that perfectly satisfies the rational creature ; and here is the saints everlasting rest. This will make up all their wants, and fill the desires of their souls, which, after all here obtained, still cry, *Give, give*, not without some anxiety ; because, though they do enjoy God, yet they do not enjoy him fully. As to the way and manner of this enjoyment, our Lord tells us, John xvii. 8. " This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Now, there are two ways, how a desirable object is known most perfectly and satisfyingly ; the one is by sight, the other by experience : sight satisfies

the understanding, and experience satisfies the will. Accordingly one may say, that the saints enjoy God, and the Lamb, in heaven. (1.) By an intuitive knowledge. (2.) By an experimental knowledge, both of them perfect; I mean, in respect of the capacity of the creature; for, otherwise, a creature's perfect knowledge of an infinite Being is impossible. The saints below, enjoy God, in that knowledge they have of him by report, from his holy word, which they believe: they see him likewise, darkly, in the glass of ordinances, which do as it were, represent the Bridegroom's picture, or shadow, while he is absent; they have also some experimental knowledge of him, they taste that God is good, and that the Lord is gracious. But the saints above shall not need a good report of the King, they shall see himself; therefore faith ceaseth; they will behold his own face; therefore ordinances are no more; there is no need of a glass; they shall drink, and drink abundantly of that whereof they have tasted; and so hope ceaseth, for they are at the utmost bounds of their desires.

1. The saints in heaven shall enjoy God and the Lamb, by sight; and that in a most perfect manner, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." Here our sight is but mediate, as by a glass; in which we see not things themselves, but the images of things: but there we shall have an immediate view of God and the Lamb. Here our knowledge is but obscure; there it shall be clear, without the least mixture of darkness. The Lord doth now converse with his saints, through the lattices of ordinances; but then shall they be in the presence-chamber with him. There is a veil now on the glorious face, as to us; but when we come to the upper house, that veil, through which some rays of beauty are now darted, will be found entirely taken off; and then shall glorious excellencies and perfections, not seen in him by mortals, be clearly discovered, for we shall see his face, Rev. xxii. 4. The phrase seems to be borrowed from the honour put on some in the courts of monarchs, to be attendants on the king's person. We read, Jer. liii. 25. of seven men of them that were (*Heb. Secrs of the king's face*, i. e. as we read it) near the king's person:

O unspeakable glory ! the great King keeps his court in heaven ; and the saints shall all be his courtiers, ever near the King's person, seeing his face : " The throne of God, and of the Lamb, shall be in it ; and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, Rev. xxii. 3, 4.

(1.) They shall see Jesus Christ with their bodily eyes, since he will never lay aside the human nature. They will always behold that glorious blessed body, which is personally united to the divine nature, and exalted far above principalities and powers, and every name that is named. There we will see, with our eyes, that very body which was born of Mary at Bethlehem, and crucified at Jerusalem betwixt two thieves ; that blessed head that was crowned with thorns ; the face that was spit upon ; the hands and feet that were nailed to the cross ; all shining with inconceivable glory. The glory of the man Christ, will attract the eyes of all the saints ; and he will be for ever admired in all them that believe, 2 Thes. i. 10. Were each star in the heavens, shining as the sun in its meridian brightness, and the light of the sun so increased, as the stars in that case, should bear the same proportion to the sun, in point of light, that they do now ; it might possibly be some faint resemblance of the glory of the man Christ, in comparison with that of the saints ; for though the saints shall shine forth as the sun ; yet not they, but the Lamb, shall be the light of the city. The wise men fell down, and worshipped him, when they saw him a young child, with Mary his mother, in the house. But O ! what a ravishing sight will it be, to see him, in his kingdom, on his throne, at the Father's right hand ! *The Word was made flesh* (John i. 14.) and the glory of God shall shine through that flesh, and the joys of heaven spring out from it, unto the saints, who shall see and enjoy God, in Christ. For since the union betwixt Christ and the saints, is never dissolved, but they continue his members for ever ; and the members cannot draw their life, but from their Head ; seeing that which is independent on the head, as to vital influence, is no member : therefore Jesus Christ will remain the everlasting bond of union betwixt God and the saints ; from



whence their eternal life shall spring, John xvii. 2, 3, 22, 23. "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, &c. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me ; that they may be made perfect in one." Wherefore, the immediate enjoyment of God in heaven, is to be understood in respect of the laying aside of word and sacraments, and such external means as we enjoy God by, in this world ; but not as if the saints should then cast off their dependence on their Head, for vital influences : nay, "The Lamb, which in the midst of the throne, shall feed them ; and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters," Rev. vii. 17.

Now, when we shall behold him, who died for us, that we might live for evermore, whose matchless love made him swim the red sea of God's wrath, to make a path in the midst of it for us, by which we might pass safely to Canaan's Land : then we will see what a glorious one he was, who suffered all this for us ; what entertainment he had in the upper house ; what hallelujahs of angels could not hinder him to hear the groans of a perishing multitude on earth, and to come down for their help ; and what a glory he laid aside for us. Then will we be more able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 19. When the saints shall remember, that the waters of wrath he was plunged into, are the wells of salvation, from whence they draw all their joy ; that they have got the cup of salvation, in exchange of the cup of wrath his Father gave him to drink, which his sinless human nature shivered at : how will their hearts leap within them, burn with seraphic love, like coals of juniper, and the arch of heaven ring with their songs of salvation ? The Jews, celebrating the feast of tabernacles (which was the most joyful of all their feasts, and lasted seven days) went once every day about the altar, singing hosanna, with their myrtle, palm, and willow branches in their hand (the two former, signs of victory, the last of chastity), in the mean time bending their boughs towards the altar. When

the saints are presented as a chaste virgin to Christ, and as conquerors, have got their palms in their hands, how joyfully will they compass the altar evermore ; and sing their hosannas, or rather their hallelujahs, about it (bending their palms towards it), acknowledging themselves to owe all unto the Lamb that was slain, and redeemed them with his blood ! And to this agrees what John saw, Rev. vii. 9. 10. "A great multitude—stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

(2.) They shall see God, Matth. v. 8. They will be happy in seeing the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (not with their bodily eyes, in respect of which God is invisible, 1 Tim. i. 17.) but with the eyes of their understanding ; being blest with the most perfect, full, and clear knowledge of God and divine things, which the creature is capable of. This is called, the *beatific vision*, and is the perfection of the understanding, the utmost term thereof. It is but an obscure delineation of the glory of God, that mortals can have on earth ; a sight, as it were, of his back part, Exod. xxxiii. 23. But there they will see his face, Rev. xxii. 4. They shall see him in the fulness of his glory, and behold him fixedly ; whereas it is but a passing view they can have of him here, Exod. xxxiv. 6. There is a vast difference betwixt the sight of a king in his night-clothes, quickly passing by us, and a fixed leisure view of him sitting on his throne, in his royal robes, his crown on his head, and his sceptre in his hand : Such a difference will there be, between the greatest manifestation of God that ever a saint had on earth, and the display of his glory that shall be seen in heaven. There the saints shall eternally, without interruption, feed their eyes upon him, and be ever viewing his glorious perfections. And as their bodily eyes shall be strengthened and fitted, to behold the glorious majesty of the man Christ ; as eagles gaze on the sun, without being blinded thereby : so their minds shall have such an elevation, as will fit them to see God in his glory. Their capacities shall be enlarged, according to the measure in which he shall be pleased to

communicate himself unto them, for their complete happiness.

This blissful sight of God, being quite above our present capacities, we must needs be much in the dark about it. But it seems to be something else, than the sight of that glory, which we will see with our bodily eyes in the saints, and in the man Christ, or any other splendour or refulgence from the Godhead whatsoever; for no created thing can be our chief good and happiness, or fully satisfy our souls; and it is plain, that these things are somewhat different from God himself. Therefore I conceive, that the souls of the saints shall see God himself; for the scriptures teach us, that we shall see face to face, and know even as we are known, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. And that we shall see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. Howbeit the saints can never have an adequate conception of God; they cannot comprehend that which is infinite. They may touch the mountain, but cannot grasp it in their arms. They cannot with one glance of their eye, behold what grows on every side; but the divine perfections will be an unbounded field, in which the glorified shall walk eternally, seeing more and more of God; since they can never come to the end of that which is infinite. They may bring their vessels to this ocean every moment, and fill them with new waters. What a ravishing sight would it be, to see all the perfections, and lovely qualities, that are scattered here and there among the creatures, gathered together into one! but even such a sight would be infinitely below this blissful sight the saints shall have of heaven. For they shall see God, in whom all these perfections shall eminently appear, with infinitely more, whereof there is no vestige to be found in the creature. In him shall they see every thing desirable, and nothing but what is desirable.

Then shall they be perfectly satisfied, as to the love of God towards them, which they are now ready to question on every turn. They will be no more set to persuade themselves of it, by marks, signs and testimonies; they will have an intuitive knowledge of it. They shall (with the profoundest reverence be it spoken) look into the heart of God, and there see the love he bore to them from all eternity, and the love and good-will he will bear to

by, what of horror is wanting in one notion of hell, is supplied by another. Why is heaven's happiness represented under the various notions of a treasure, a paradise, a feast, a rest, &c. but that there is not one of these things sufficient to express it? Even so, hell-torments are represented under the notion of fire; which the damned are cast into. A dreadful representation indeed! yet not sufficient to express the misery of the state of sinners in them. Wherefore we hear also of the second death, (Rev. xx. 6.) for the damned in hell shall be ever dying; of the wine-press of the wrath of God, (chap. xiv. 19.) wherein they will be trodden in anger, trampled in the Lord's fury, (Isa. lxiii. 3.) pressed, broken, and bruised, without end: The worm that dieth not, (Mark ix. 44.) which shall eternally gnaw them; a bottomless pit, where they will be ever sinking, Rev. xx. 3. It is not simply called a fire, but the lake of fire and brimstone, (ver. 19.) a lake of fire burning with brimstone, (chap. xix. 20.) than which one can imagine nothing more dreadful. Yet, because fire gives light, and light (as Solomon observes, Eccl. xi. 7.) is sweet, there is no light there, but darkness, utter darkness, Mat. xxv. 30. For they must have an everlasting night, since nothing can be there, which is in any measure comfortable or refreshing.

3. Our fire cannot affect a spirit, but by way of sympathy with the body to which it is united; but hell-fire will not only pierce into the bodies, but directly into the souls of the damned; for it is prepared for the devil and his angels, these wicked spirits, whom no fire on earth can hurt. Job complains heavily, under the chastisement of God's fatherly hand, saying, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit," Job vi. 4. But how will the spirits of the damned be pierced with the arrows of revenging justice! How will they be drunk up with the poison of the curse on these arrows! How vehement must that fire be, that pierceth directly into the soul, and makes an everlasting burning in the spirit, the most lively and tender part of a man, wherein wounds or pain are most intolerable!

*Lastly*, The preparation of this fire, evinceth the inexpressible vehemence and dreadfulfulness of it. The text calls it prepared fire, yea, the prepared fire, by way of eminency.

ing waters, who will fully and freely communicate himself unto them. He will pour out of his goodness eternally into their souls; and then shall they have a most lively sensation, in the innermost part of their souls, of all that goodness they heard of, and believed to be in him; and of what they see in him by the light of glory. This will be an everlasting practical exposition of that word, which men and angels cannot sufficiently unfold, viz. God shall—"be their God," Rev xi. 3. God will communicate himself unto them fully; they will be no more set to taste of the streams of divine goodness in ordinances, as they were wont, but shall drink at the fountain-head. They will be no more entertained with sips and drops, but filled with all the fulness of God. And this will be the entertainment of every saint; for, though in created things, what is given to one, is withheld from another; yet an infinite good can fully communicate itself to all, and fill all. These who are heirs of God, the great heritage, shall then enter into a full possession of their inheritances; and the Lord will open his treasures of goodness unto them, that their enjoyment may be full. They shall not be stinted to any measure; but the enjoyment shall go as far as their enlarged capacities can reach. As a narrow vessel cannot contain the ocean, so neither can the finite creature comprehend an infinite good; but no measure shall be set to the enjoyment, but what ariseth from the capacity of the creature. So that, although there be degrees of glory, yet all shall be filled and have what they can hold; though some would be capable to hold more than others, there will be no want to any of them, all shall be fully satisfied, and perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of divine goodness, according to their enlarged capacities. As when bottles of different sizes are filled, some contain more, others less; yet all of them have what they can contain. The glorified shall have all in God, for the satisfaction of all their desires. No created thing can afford satisfaction to all our desires; clothes may warm us, but they cannot feed us; the light is comfortable, but cannot nourish us. But in God we shall have all our desires, and we shall desire nothing without him. They shall be the happy ones, that desire nothing but what is truly desirable; and withal have all they desire.

God will be all in all to the saints ; he will be their life, health, riches, honour, peace, and all good things. He will communicate himself freely to them ; the door of access to him shall never be shut again, for one moment. They may, when they will, take of the fruits of the tree of life, for they will find it on each side of the river, Rev. xxii. 2. There will be no veil betwixt God and them, to be drawn aside ; but his fulness shall ever stand open to them. No door to knock at in heaven ; no asking to go before receiving ; the Lord will allow his people an unrestrained familiarity with himself there.

Now they are in part made partakers of the divine nature ; then they shall perfectly partake of it ; that is to say, God will communicate to them his own image, make all his goodness not only pass before them, but pass into them, and stamp the image of all his perfections on them, so far as the creature is capable to receive the same ; from whence shall result a perfect likeness to him, in all things in or about them, which completes the happiness of the creature. And this is what the Psalmist seems to have had in view, Psalm xvii. 15. " I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness ; " the perfection of God's image, following upon the beatific vision. And so says John, 1 John iii. 2. " We shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. " Hence there shall be a most close and intimate union betwixt God and the saints : God shall be in them, and they in God, in the way of a most glorious and perfect union ; for then shall they dwell in love made perfect. " God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him, " 1 John iv. 16. How will the saints knit with God, and he with them ; when he sees nothing in them, but his own image ; when their love shall arrive at its perfection, no nature but the divine nature, being left in them ; and all imperfection swallowed up in that glorious transformation into the likeness of God ! their love to the Lord being purged from the dross of self-love, shall be most pure ; so as they will love nothing but God, and in God. It shall be no more faint and languishing, but burn like coals of juniper. It will be a light without darkness, a flaming fire without smoke. As the live coal, when all the moisture is gone out of it, is all fire ; so will the saints be all love, when

they come to the full enjoyment of God in heaven, by intuitive and experimental knowledge of him, by sight and full participation of the divine goodness.

*Lastly*, From this glorious presence and enjoyment shall arise an unspeakable joy, which the saints shall be filled with. "In thy presence is fulness of joy," Psalm xvi. 11. The saints sometimes enjoy God in the world, when their eyes being held, that they cannot perceive it, they have not the comfort of the enjoyment; but then, all mistakes being removed, they shall not only enjoy God, but rest in the enjoyment, with inexpressible joy and satisfaction. The desire of earthly things breeds torment, and the enjoyment of them often ends in loathing. But though the glorified saints shall ever desire more and more of God, their desires shall not be mixt with the least anxiety, since the fulness of the God-head stands always open to them; therefore they shall hunger no more, they shall not have the least uneasiness, in their eternal appetite after the hidden manna; neither shall continued enjoyment breed loathing; they shall never think they have too much; therefore it is added, "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat," Rev. vii. 16. The enjoyment of God and the Lamb will be ever fresh and new to them, through the ages of eternity; for they shall drink of living fountains of waters, where new waters are continually springing up in abundance, ver. 17. They shall eat of the tree of life, which for variety, affords twelve manner of fruits, and these always new and fresh, for it yields every month, Rev. xxii. 2. Their joy shall be pure and unmixed, without any dregs of sorrow: not slight and momentary, but solid and everlasting, without interruption. They will enter into joy, Matth. xxv. 21. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The expression is somewhat unusual, and brings me in mind of that word of our suffering Redeemer, Mark xiv. 34. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death." His soul was beset with sorrows, as the word there used, will bear: the floods of sorrow went round about him, encompassing him on every hand: whithersoever he turned his eyes, sorrow was before him; it sprang in upon him, from heaven, earth, and hell, all at once; thus was he entered into sorrow, and therefore saith, Psal. lxxix. 2.

"I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." Now, wherefore all this, but that his own might enter into joy? Joy sometimes enters into us now, with much ado to get access, while we are compassed with sorrows; but then joy shall not only enter into us, but we shall enter into it, and swim for ever in an ocean of joy; where we will see nothing but joy, whithersoever we turn our eyes. The presence and enjoyment of God and the Lamb, will satisfy us with pleasures for evermore; and the glory of our souls and bodies, arising from thence, will afford us everlasting delight. The spirit of heaviness, how closely soever it cleaves to any of the saints, shall drop off then; their weeping shall be turned into songs of joy, and bottles of tears shall issue in rivers of pleasures. Happy they who now sow in tears, which shall spring up in joy in heaven, and bow their heads there with a weight of glory upon them.

Thus far of the society in this kingdom of the saints.

X. In the *last* place, The kingdom shall endure for ever. As every thing in it is eternal, so the saints shall have an undoubted certainty and full assurance of the eternal duration of the same. This is a necessary ingredient in perfect happiness: for the least uncertainty, as to the continuance of any good with one, is not without some fear, anxiety, and torment: and, therefore is utterly inconsistent with perfect happiness. But the glorified shall never have fear, nor cause of fear, of any loss; they shall be ever with the Lord, 1 Thes. iv. 17. They shall attain the full persuasion, that nothing shall be able to separate them from the love of God, nor from the full enjoyment of him, for ever. The inheritance, reserved in heaven, is incorruptible; it hath no principle of corruption, in itself, to make it liable to decay, but endures for evermore: it is undefiled; nothing from without can mar its beauty, nor is there any thing in itself, to offend those who enjoy it: And therefore it fadeth not away, but ever remains in its native lustre, and primitive beauty, 1 Pet. i. 4. Hitherto of the nature of the kingdom of heaven.

SECONDLY, Proceed we now, to speak of the admission of the saints into this their kingdom; where I shall briefly touch upon two things: (1.) The formal admis-



sion, in the call unto them from the Judge, to come to their kingdom. (2.) The quality in which they are admitted and introduced to it.

I. Their admission, the text shews to be by a voice from the throne; the King calling to them from the throne, before angels and men, to come to their kingdom. *Come* and *go* are but short words, but they will be such as will afford matter of thought to all mankind, through the ages of eternity; since upon the one depends everlasting happiness, and upon the other, everlasting misery. Now our Lord bids the worst of sinners, who hear the gospel, *Come*; but the most part will not come unto him. Some few, whose hearts are touched by his Spirit, do embrace the call, and their souls within them say *Behold! we come unto thee*: they give themselves to the Lord, forsake the world and their lusts for him; they bear his yoke, and cast it not off, no not in the heat of the day, when the weight of it, perhaps, makes them sweat the blood out of their bodies. Behold the fools, saith the carnal world, whither are they going? But stay a little, O foolish world! From the same mouth, whence they had the call they are now following, another call shall come, which will make amends for all: "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom,*" &c.

The saints shall find an inexpressible sweetness in this call, to come: (1.) Hereby Jesus Christ shews his desire of their society in the upper house, that they may be ever with them there. Thus he will open his heart unto them, as sometimes he did to his Father concerning them, saying, "*Father, I will that they—be with me, where I am,*" &c. John xvii. 24. Now the travail of his soul stands before the throne, not only the souls, but the bodies he has redeemed; and they must come, for he must be completely satisfied.—(2.) Hereby they are solemnly invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. They were invited to the lower table, by the voice of the servants, and the secret workings of the Spirit within them; and they came, and did partake of the feast of divine communications in the lower house; but Jesus Christ, in person, shall invite them, before all the world, to the higher table. (3.) By this he admits them into the mansions of glory. The keys of heaven hang at the gir-

dle of our royal Mediator : All power in heaven is given to him, Mat. xxviii. 18. and none get in thither, but whom he admits. When they were living on earth, with the rest of the world, he opened the everlasting doors of their hearts, entered into them himself, and shut them again, so as sin could never re-enter, to reign there as formerly : and now he opens heaven's doors to them, draws his doves into the ark, and shuts them in there ; so as the law, death and hell, can never get them out again. The saints, in this life, were still labouring to enter into that rest ; but satan was always pulling them back, their corruption always drawing them down ; in so much, that they have sometimes been left to hang by a hair of a promise (if I may be allowed the expression), not without fears of falling into the lake of fire : but now Christ gives the word for their admission ; they are brought in, and put beyond all hazard. *Lastly*, Thus he speaks to them, as the person introducing them into the kingdom, into the presence-chamber of the great King, and unto the throne. Jesus Christ is the great Secretary of heaven, whose it is to bring the saints into the gracious presence of God ; and to whom alone it belongs, to bring them into the glorious presence of God in heaven. Truly heaven would be a strange place to them, if Jesus was not there : but the Son will introduce his brethren into his Father's kingdom ; they shall go in with him to the marriage, Matth. xxv 10.

II. Let us consider in what quality they are introduced by him.

*First*, He brings them in as the blessed of his Father : so runs the call from the throne ; " Come, ye blessed of my Father," &c. It is Christ's Father's house, they are to come into ; therefore he puts them in mind, that they are blessed of his Father ; dear to the Father, as well as to himself. This is it, that makes heaven home to them ; namely, that it is Christ's Father's house, where we may be assured of welcome, being married to the Son, and being his Father's choice for that very end. He brings them in for his Father's sake, as well as for his own ; they are the blessed of his Father, who, as he is the fountain of the Deity, is also the fountain of all blessings conferred on the children of men. They are these to whom God

designed well from eternity. They were blessed in the eternal purpose of God, being elected to everlasting life: at the opening of the book of life, their names were found written therein. So that, bringing them to the kingdom, he doth but bring them to what the Father, from all eternity, designed for them; being saved by the Son, they are saved according to his (*i. e.* the Father's) purpose, 2 Tim. i. 9. They are these, to whom the Father has spoken well. He spake well to them in his word, which must now receive its full accomplishment. They had his promise of the kingdom, lived and died in the faith of it; and now they come to receive the thing promised. Unto them he has done well: A gift is often, in scripture, called a blessing; and God's blessing is ever real, like Isaac's blessing, by which Jacob became his heir; they were all by grace justified, sanctified, and made to persevere unto the end; now they are raised up in glory, and, being tried, stand in the judgment: what remains then, but that God crown his own work of grace in them, in giving them their kingdom, in the full enjoyment of himself for ever? *Finally*, They are these, whom God has consecrated; the which, also, is a scripture-notion of blessing, 1 Cor. x. 16. God set them apart for himself, to be kings and priests unto him; and the Mediator introduceth them, as such, to their kingdom and priesthood.

*Secondly*, Christ introduceth them, as heirs of the Kingdom to the actual possession of it: "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom," &c. They are the children of God, by regeneration and adoption: "And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. Now is the general assembly of the first-born before the throne: their minority is overpast, and the time appointed of the Father, for their receiving of their inheritance is come. The Mediator purchased the inheritance for them, with his own blood; their rights and evidences were drawn long ago, and registered in the Bible: nay, they had infetment of their inheritance, in the person of Jesus Christ, as their proxy, when he ascended into heaven, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, Heb. vi. 20. Nothing remaineth, but that they enter into personal possession thereof; which, begun at death, is perfected at the last day; when the

saints, in their bodies as well as their souls, go into their kingdom.

*Lastly*, They are introduced to it, as these it was prepared for, from the foundation of the world. The kingdom was prepared for them in the eternal purpose of God, before they or any of them had a being ; which shews it to be a gift of free grace to them. It was, from eternity, the divine purpose, that there should be such a kingdom for the elect ; and that all impediments, which might mar their access to it, should be removed out of the way ; and withal, by the same eternal decree, every one's place in it was determined and set apart, to be reserved for him, that each of the children coming home at length into their Father's house, might find his own place awaiting him, and ready for him ; as, at Saul's table, David's place was empty, when he was not there to occupy it himself, 1 Sam. xx. 25. And now that the appointed time is come, they are brought in to take their several places in glory, set apart and reserved for them, till they should come at them.

USE. I shall shut up my discourse on this subject, with a word of application. (1.) To all who claim a right to this kingdom. (2.) To these who have indeed a right to it. (3.) To these who have not a right thereto.

*First*, Since it is evident, there is no promiscuous admission into the kingdom of heaven ; and none do obtain it, but these whose claim is solemnly tried by the great Judge, and, after trial, sustained as good and valid ; it is necessary that all of us impartially try and examine, whether, according to the laws of the kingdom, contained in the holy Scriptures, we can verify and make good our claim to this kingdom ? The hopes of heaven, which most men have, are built on such sandy foundations, as can never abide the trial ; having no ground in the word, but in their own deluded fancy : such hopes will leave those who entertain them, miserably disappointed at last. Wherefore, it is not only our duty, but our interest, to put the matter to a fair trial in time. If we find, we have no right to heaven, indeed we are yet in the way ; and what we have not, we may obtain ; but if we find we have a right to it, we will then have the comfort of a happy prospect into eternity, which is the greatest com-

fort one is capable of in the world. If ye enquire, How ye may know whether ye have a right to heaven, or not? I answer, ye must know that, by the state ye are now in. If you are yet in your natural state, ye are children of wrath, and not children of this kingdom; for that state, to them who live and die in it, issues in eternal misery. If you be brought into the state of grace, you have a just claim to the state of glory; for grace will certainly issue in glory at length. This kingdom is an inheritance, which none but the children of God can justly claim; now we become the children of God, by regeneration and union with Christ his Son: "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. These then are the great points, upon which one's evidence for the state of glory do depend. And therefore I refer you to what is said on the state of grace, for clearing of you as to your right to glory.

If you be heirs of glory, the kingdom of God is within you, by virtue of your regeneration and union with Christ. (1.) The kingdom of heaven has the throne in thy heart, if thou hast a right to that kingdom: Christ is in thee, and God is in thee; and having chosen him for thy portion, thy soul has taken up its everlasting rest in him, and gets no kindly rest but in him; as the dove, until she came into the ark. To him the soul habitually inclines, by virtue of the new nature, the divine nature, which the heirs of glory are partakers of, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee. And there is none upon earth, that I desire besides thee." (2.) The laws of heaven are in thy heart, if thou art an heir of heaven, Heb. viii. 10. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Thy mind is enlightened in the knowledge of the laws of the kingdom, by the Spirit of the Lord, the instructor of all the heirs of glory; for whoever may want instruction, sure an heir to a crown shall not want it. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God," John vi. 45. Therefore, though father and mother leave them early, or be in no concern about their Christian education, and they be soon put to work for their daily bread; yet they shall not lack teaching. Withal thy heart is

changed, and thou bearest God's image, which consists in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Thy soul is reconciled to the whole law of God, and at war with all known sin. In vain do they pretend to the holy kingdom, who are not holy in heart and life ; for, " Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. If heaven is a rest, it is for spiritual labourers, and not for loiterers. If it is an eternal triumph, they are not in the way to it, who avoid the spiritual warfare, and are in no care to subdue corruption, resist temptation, and to cut their way to it, through the opposition made by the devil, the world, and the flesh. (3.) The treasure in heaven is the chief in thy esteem and desire, for it is your treasure ; and, " Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," Matth. vi. 21. If it is not the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, which thy heart is in greatest care and concern to obtain ; if thou art driving a trade with heaven, and thy chief business lies there ; it is a sign thy treasure is there, for thy heart is there. But if thou art of these who wonder why so much ado, about heaven and eternal life, as if less might serve the turn ; thou art like to have nothing to do with it at all. Carnal men value themselves most on their treasures upon earth ; with them, the things that are seen, are weighed down by the things that are not seen ; and no losses do so much affect them as earthly losses : but the heirs of the crown of glory, will value themselves most on their treasures in heaven, and will not put their private estate in the balance with their kingdom ; nor will the loss of the former go so near their hearts, as the thoughts of the loss of the latter. Where these first fruits of heaven are to be found, the eternal weight of glory will surely follow after ; while the want of them must be admitted, according to the word, to be incontestible evidence of an heir of wrath.

*Secondly,* Let the heirs of the kingdom behave themselves suitable to their character and dignity. Live as having the faith and hope of this glorious kingdom : let your conversation be in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. Let your souls delight in communion with God, while ye are on earth, since ye look for your happiness in communion with him in heaven ; let your speech and actions savour

of heaven : and, in your manner of life, look like the country to which ye are going ; that it may be said of you, as of Gideon's brethren, Judges viii. 28. each one resembled the children of a king. Maintain a holy contempt of the world, and of the things of the world. Although others whose earthly things are their best things, do set their hearts upon them ; yet it becomes you to set your feet on them, since your best things are above. This world is but the country, through which lies your road to Immanuel's land ; therefore pass through it as pilgrims and strangers, and dip not into the incumbrances of it, so as to retard you in your journey. It is unworthy of one born to a palace, to set his heart on a cottage, to dwell there ; and of one running for a prize of gold, to go off his way, to gather the stones of the brook ; but much more is it unworthy of an heir of the kingdom of heaven, to be hid among the stuff of this world, when he should be going on to receive his crown. The prize set before you, challengeth your utmost zeal, activity and diligence ; and holy courage, resolution, and magnanimity, become those who are to inherit the crown. Ye cannot come at it, without fighting your way to it, through difficulties from without, and from within ; but the kingdom before you is sufficient to balance them all, though ye should be called to resist, even unto blood. Prefer Christ's cross before the world's crown ; and wants in the way of duty before ease and wealth in the way of sin ; " Choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," Heb. xi. 25. In a common inn, strangers (perhaps) fare better than the children ; but here lies the difference, the children are to pay nothing for what they have got, but the strangers get their bill, and must pay completely for all they have had. Did we consider the wicked's after-reckoning, for all the smiles of common providence they meet with in the world, we would not grudge them their good things here ; nor take it amiss that God keeps our best things last. Heaven will make up all the saints losses, and all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes there.

It is worth observing, that there is such a variety of scripture-notions of heaven's happiness, as may suit every afflicted case of the saints. Are they oppressed ?

end ; but there they must live, who chused death and refused life ; for there death lives, and the end ever begins.

*2dly*, The curse shall lie upon them eternally as the everlasting chain, to hold them in everlasting fire ; a chain that shall never be loosed, being fixed for ever about them, by the dreadful sentence of the eternal judgment. This chain which spurns the united force of devils held fast by it, is too strong to be broken by men, who being solemnly anathematised and devoted to destruction, can never be recovered to any other use.

*3dly*, Their punishment shall be eternal, Mat. xxv. 46. " They shall go away into everlasting punishment." They will be for ever-separated from God and Christ, and from the society of the holy angels and saints ; between whom and them, an impassible gulf will be fixed, Luke xvi. 26. " Between us and you" (says Abraham in the parable, to the rich man in hell), " there is a great gulf fixed ; so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot ; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." They shall for ever have the horrible society of the devil and his angels. There will be no change of company for evermore in that region of darkness. Their torment in the fire will be everlasting ; they must live for ever in it. Several authors, both ancient and modern, tell us of earthen flax, or Salamander's hair ; that cloth made of it, being cast into the fire, is so far from being burnt or consumed, that it is only made clean thereby, as other things are by washing. But however that is, it is certain, the damned shall be tormented for ever and ever in hell fire, and not substantially destroyed, Rev. xx. 10. And indeed nothing is annihilated by fire, but only dissolved. Of what nature soever hell fire is, no question but the same God who kept the bodies of the three children from burning in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, can also keep the bodies of the damned from any such dissolution by hell fire, as may infer privation of life.

*Lastly*, Their knowledge and sense of their misery, shall be eternal ; and they shall assuredly know that it will be eternal. How desirable would it be to them, to have their senses for ever locked up, and lose the consciousness of their own misery ; as one may rationally suppose it to fare at length with some, in the punishment of death inflicted



happiness is opened, it is no time to sit still and loiter. Raise up your hearts towards the glory that is to be revealed; and do not always lie along on this perishing earth. What can all your worldly enjoyments avail you, while you have no solid ground to expect heaven, after this life is gone? These riches and honours, profits and pleasures, that must be buried with us, and cannot accompany us into another world, are but a wretched portion, and will leave men comfortless at long-run. Ah! why are men so fond, in their life-time to receive their good things! why are they not rather in care, to secure an interest in the kingdom of heaven, which would never be taken from them, but afford them a portion, to make them happy through the ages of eternity! If you desire honour, there you may have the highest honour, and which will last, when the world's honours are laid in the dust: if riches, heaven will yield you a treasure; and there are pleasures for evermore. O! be not despisers of the pleasant land, neither judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life; but marry the heir, and heaven shall be your dowry; close with Christ, as he is offered to you in the gospel, and ye shall inherit all things. Walk in the way of holiness, and it will lead you to the kingdom. Fight against sin and satan, and ye shall receive the crown. Forsake the world, and the doors of heaven will open to receive you.

# HEAD VI.

HELL.



MAT. XXV. 41.

*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

**W**ERE there no other place of eternal lodging but heaven, I should here have closed my discourse of man's eternal state: But seeing in the other world, there is a prison for the wicked, as well as a palace for the saints, we must also enquire into that state of everlasting misery; the which the worst of men may well bear with, without crying, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* Since there is yet access to fly from the wrath to come; and all that can be said of it comes short of what the damned will feel; for who knoweth the power of God's anger?

The last thing our Lord did, before he left the earth was, He lifted up his hands and blessed his disciples, Luke xxiv. 50, 51. But the last thing he will do, before he leave the throne, is to curse and condemn his enemies: as we learn from the text, which contains the dreadful sentence, wherein the everlasting misery of the wicked is wrapt up. In which three things may be taken notice of. *First*, The quality of the condemned, *ye cursed*. The Judge finds the curse of the law upon them as transgressors, and sends them away with it, from his presence into hell, there to be fully executed upon them. *Secondly*, The punishment which they are adjudged to, and to which

one unbecoming thought of God, and far less an unbecoming word.

**USE I.** Here is a measuring Reed; O! that men would apply it. *First*, Apply it to your time in this world, and you will find your time to be very short. A prospect of much time to come, proves the ruin of many souls. Men will be reckoning their time by years, like that rich man, Luke xii. 19, 20. When it may be, there are not many hours of it to run. But reckon as you will, laying your time to the measuring reed of eternity, you will see your age is as nothing. What a small and inconsiderable point is sixty, eighty, or a hundred years, in respect of eternity? Compared with eternity, there is a greater disproportion, than between a hair's breadth, and the circumference of the whole earth. Why do we sleep then in such a short day, while we are in hazard of losing rest, through the long night of eternity? *Secondly*, Apply it to your endeavours for salvation, and they will be found very scanty. When men are pressed to diligence in their salvation work, they are ready to say, "To what purpose is this waste? Alas! if it were to be judged by our diligence, what is it that we have in view; as to the most part of us, no man could thereby conjecture, that we have eternity in view. If we duly considered eternity, we could not but conclude, that, to leave no means appointed of God unessayed, till we get our salvation secured; to refuse rest or comfort in any thing, till we are sheltered under the wings of the Mediator; to pursue our great interest with the utmost vigour, to cut off lusts dear as right hands and right eyes, to set our faces resolutely against all difficulties, and fight our way through all the opposition made by the devil, the world and the flesh, are, all of them together, little enough for eternity.

**USE II.** Here is a balance of the sanctuary, by which one may understand the lightness of what is falsely thought weighty; and the weight of some things, by many reckoned to be very light.

*First*, Some things seem very weighty, which weighed in this balance, will be found very light. (1.) Weigh the world, and all that is in it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and the whole will be found light, in the balance of eternity. Weigh herein all worldly

nihilation, or a reducing them to nothing, will be clear in the progress of our discourse.) In treating of this awful subject, I shall enquire into these four things: (1.) The curse under which the damned shall be shut up. (2.) Their misery under that curse. (3.) Their society with devils in this miserable state. (4.) The eternity of the whole.

I. As to the curse under which the damned shall be shut up in hell, it is the terrible sentence of the law, by which they are bound over to the wrath of God, as transgressors. This curse does not first seize them, when, standing before the tribunal, they receive their sentence; but they were born under it, they led their life under it in this world; they died under it; rose with it out of their graves; and the Judge finding it upon them, sends them away with it into the pit; where it shall lie on them through the ages of eternity. By nature all men are under the curse; but it is removed from the elect, by virtue of their union with Christ. It abides on the rest of sinful mankind; and by it they are devoted to destruction, separated to evil, as one may describe the curse, from Deut. xxix. 21. "And the Lord shall separate him unto evil." Thus shall the damned, for ever, be persons devoted to destruction; separate and set apart, from among the rest of mankind, unto evil, as vessels of wrath, set up for marks to the arrows of divine wrath; and made the common receptacle and sewer of vengeance.

This curse hath its first fruits on earth, which are a pledge of the whole lump that is to follow. And hence it is, that as temporal and eternal benefits are bound up together, under the same expressions in the promise to the Lord's people, as Isa. xxxv. 10. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion," &c. relating both to the return from Babylon, and to the saints going to their eternal rest in heaven: Even so temporal and eternal miseries, on the enemies of God, are sometimes wrapt up under one and the same expression in the threatening, as Isa. xxx. 33. "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea for the king it is prepared: He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood: The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." Which relates both to the temporal and eternal destruction of the

**Assyrians, who fell by the hand of the angel before Jerusalem.** See also, Isa. lxvi. 24. What is that judicial blindness, to which many are given up ("In whom the God of this world hath blinded their eyes," 2 Cor. iv. 4.) But the first fruits of hell, and of the curse? Their sun is going down at noon-day; their darkness increasing, as if it would not stop, till it issue in utter darkness. Many a lash in the dark, would conscience give the wicked, which the world doth not hear of: And what is that, but that the never dying worm is already begun to gnaw them? And there is not one of these, but they may call it *Joseph, for the Lord shall add another*: Or rather, *Gad, for a troop cometh*. These drops of wrath, are terrible forebodings of the full shower which is to follow. Sometimes they are given up to their vile affections, that they have no more command over them, Rom. i. 26. So their lusts grow up more and more towards perfection, if I may so speak. As in heaven grace comes to its perfection, so in hell sin arrives at its highest pitch; and as sin is thus advancing upon the man, he is the nearer and the liker to hell. There are three things that have a fearful aspect here. *First*, When every thing that might do good to men's souls is blasted to them; so that their blessings are cursed, Mal. ii. 3. sermons, prayers, admonitions, and reproofs, which are powerful towards others, are quite inefficacious to them. *2dly*, When men go on sinning still in the face of plain rebukes from the Lord, in ordinances and providences: God meets them with rods, in the way of their sin, as it were striking them back; yet they rush forward. What can be more like hell, where the Lord is always smiting, and the damned always sinning against him? *Lastly*, When every thing in one's lot is turned in to fuel to one's lusts. Thus adversity and prosperity, poverty and wealth, the want of ordinances and the enjoyment of them, do all but nourish the corruptions of many. Their vicious stomachs corrupt whatsoever they receive, and all does but increase noxious humours.

But the full harvest follows, in that misery which they shall for ever lie under in hell; that wrath, which by virtue of the curse, shall come upon them to the uttermost: the which, is the curse fully executed. This black cloud opens upon them, and the terrible thunder-bolt strikes

them by that dreadful voice from the throne, "Depart from me, ye cursed," &c. Which will give the whole wicked world a dismal view of what is in the bosom of the curse. (1.) It is a voice of extreme indignation and wrath, a furious rebuke from the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His looks will be most terrible to them: His eyes will cast flames of fire on them; and his words will pierce their hearts like envenomed arrows. When he will thus speak them out of his presence for ever, and by his word, chase them away from before the throne; they will see how keenly wrath burns in his heart against them for their sins. (2.) It is a voice of extreme disdain and contempt from the Lord. Time was, when they were pitied, besought to pity themselves, and to be the Lord's; but they despised him, they would none of him: but now shall they be buried out of his sight, under everlasting contempt. (3.) It is a voice of extreme hatred. Hereby the Lord shuts them out of his bowels of love and mercy: *Depart from me, ye cursed, &c.* I cannot endure to look at you; there is not one purpose of good to you in mine heart; nor shall ye ever hear one word more of hope from me. *Lastly*, It is a voice of eternal rejection from the Lord. He commands them to be gone, and so casts them off for ever. Thus the doors of heaven are shut against them; the gulf is fixed between them and it, and they are driven to the pit. Now should they cry with all possible earnestness, *Lord, Lord, open to us*; they will hear nothing but, *Depart, depart, ye cursed*. Thus shall the damned be shut up under the curse.

Use *First*, Let all these who, being yet in their natural state, and under the curse, consider this, and flee to Jesus Christ betimes, that they may be delivered from it. How can ye sleep in that state, being wrapt up in the curse! Jesus Christ is now saying unto you, Come, ye cursed; I will take the curse from off you, and give you the blessing. The waters of the sanctuary are now running, to heal the cursed ground; take heed to improve them for that end to your own souls, and fear it as hell, to get no spiritual advantage thereby. Remember that the *miry places* (which are neither sea, nor dry land, a fit emblem of hypocrites) and the *marshies* (that neither breed fishes, nor bear trees: but the waters of the sanctuary leave them as they find

in a state past remedy, to speak forth their fruitless wishes: O that I had never been born ! That the womb had been my grave, and I had never seen the sun ! O that I had taken warning in time, and fled from this wrath, while the door of mercy was standing open to me ! O that I had never heard the gospel, that I had lived in some corner of the world, where a Saviour and the great salvation were not once named ! But all in vain. What is done cannot be undone ; the opportunity is lost, and can never be retrieved ; time is gone, and cannot be recalled. Wherefore improve time, while you have it, and do not wilfully ruin yourselves, by stopping your ear to the gospel-call.

And now if ye would be saved from the wrath to come, and never go into this place of torment, take no rest in your natural state ; believe the sinfulness and misery of it, and labour to get out of it quickly, fleeing unto Jesus Christ by faith. Sin in you is the seed of hell ; and if the guilt and reigning power of it, be not removed in time, they will bring you to the second death in eternity. There is no way to get them removed, but by receiving of Christ, as he is offered in the gospel, for justification and sanctification ; and he is now offered to you with all his salvation, Rev. xxii. 12, 17. " And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Jesus Christ is the Mediator of peace, and the Fountain of holiness ; he it is who delivereth us from the wrath to come. " There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1. And the terrors of hell, as well as the joys of heaven, are set before you, to stir you up to a cordial receiving of him, with all his salvation ; and to determine you unto the way of faith and holiness, in which alone you can escape the everlasting fire. May the Lord himself, make them effectual to that end.

Thus far of man's Eternal State ; the which, because it is eternal, admits of no succeeding one for ever.

*F I N I S.*

cxix. 8. But they shall be miserable beyond expression in a relative separation from God. Though he will be present in the very centre of their souls (if I may so express it) while they are wrapt up in fiery flames, in utter darkness, it shall not only be to feed them with the vinegar of his wrath, to entertain them with the emanations of his revenging justice; but they shall never taste more of his goodness and bounty, nor have the least glimpse of hope from him. They will see his heart to be absolutely alienated from them; and that it cannot be towards them; but that they are the party against whom the Lord will have an indignation for ever. They shall be deprived of the glorious presepce and enjoyment of God; they shall have no part in the beatific vision, nor see any thing in God towards them, but one wave of wrath rolling at the back of another. This will bring upon them, overwhelming floods of sorrows for evermore. They shall never taste of the rivers of pleasures the saints in heaven enjoy; but shall have an everlasting winter, and a perpetual night, because the Sun of righteousness has departed from them, and so they are left in utter darkness. So great as heaven's happiness is, so great will their loss be; for they can have none of it for ever.

This separation of the wicked from God, will be, (1.) An involuntary separation. Now they depart from him, they will not come to him, though they are called, intreated and obtested to come: but then they shall be driven away from him, when they would gladly abide with him. Although the question, "What is thy beloved, more than another beloved?" is frequent now amongst the despisers of the gospel, there will be no such question among all the damned crew; for then they will see, that man's happiness is only to be found in the enjoyment of God; and that the loss of him, is a loss that can never be balanced. (2.) It will also be a total and utter separation. Albeit the wicked are in this life separated from God, yet there is a kind of intercourse betwixt them: he gives them many good gifts, and they give him, at least, some good words: so that the peace is not altogether hopeless. But then there shall be a total separation; the damned being cast into utter darkness, where there will not be the least gleam of light or favour from the Lord: the which will put an end unto



all their fair words to him. *Lastly*, It shall be a final separation: they will part with him never more to meet; being shut up under everlasting horror and despair. The match betwixt Jesus Christ and unbelievers, which has so often been carried forward, and put back again, shall then be broken for ever: and never shall one message of favour or good-will, go betwixt the parties any more.

This punishment of loss, in a total and final separation from God, is a misery beyond what mortals can conceive, and which the dreadful experience of the damned can only sufficiently unfold. But that we may have some conception of the horror of it, let the following things be considered:

1st, God is the chief good, and therefore to be separated from him must be the chief evil. Our native country, our relations, and our life are good; and, therefore, to be deprived of them, we reckon a great evil: and the better any thing is, so much the greater evil is the loss of it: wherefore, God being the chief good, and no good comparable to him, there can be no loss so great as the loss of God. The full enjoyment of him is the highest pinnacle of happiness the creature is capable of arriving at; to be fully and finally separated from him, must then be the lowest step of misery which the rational creature can be reduced to. To be cast off by men, by good men, by the best of men, is heavy; what must it then be to be rejected of God, of goodness itself!

2dly, God is the fountain of all goodness, from which all goodness flows unto the creatures, and by which it is continued in them and to them. Whatever goodness or perfection, natural as well as moral, is in any creature, it is from God, and depends upon him as the light is from and depends on the sun: for every created being, as such, is a dependent one. Wherefore a total separation from God, wherein all comfortable communication betwixt God and a rational creature is absolutely blocked up, must of necessity bring along with it a total eclipse of all light of comfort and ease whatsoever. If there is but one window or open place in a house, and that be quite shut up; it is evident there can be nothing but darkness in that house. Our Lord tells us, Matth. xix 17. "There is none good but one, that is God." Nothing good or comfortable is

originally from the creature; whatever good or comfortable thing one finds in one's self, as health of body or peace of mind; whatever sweetness, rest, pleasure, or delight, one finds in other creatures, as in meat, drink, art or sciences; all these are but some faint rays of the divine perfections, communicated from God unto the creature, and depending on a constant influence from him for their conversation; which failing, they would immediately be gone; for it is impossible that any created thing can be to us more or better than what God makes it to be. All the rivulets of comfort we drink of, within or without ourselves, come from God as their spring-head: the course of which towards us being stopt, of necessity they must all dry up. So that when God goes, all that is good and comfortable goes with him; all ease and quiet of body or mind, Hos. ix. 12. "Wo also unto them, when I depart from them." When the wicked are totally and finally separated from him, all that is comfortable in or about them, returns to its fountain, as the light goes away with the sun and darkness succeeds in the room thereof. Thus, in their separation from God, all peace is removed far away from them, and pain in body, and anguish of soul succeed to it; all joy goes, and unmixed sorrow settles in them; all quiet and rest separate from them, and they are filled with horror and rage; hope flees away and despair seizeth them; common operations of the Spirit which now restrain them, are withdrawn for ever, and sin comes to its utmost height. And thus we have a dismal view of the horrible spectacle of sin and misery which a creature proves when totally separated from God, and left to itself; and one may see this separation to be the very hell of hell.

Being separated from God they are deprived of all good. The good things which they set their heart upon in this world, are beyond their reach there. The covetous man cannot enjoy his wealth there, nor the ambitious man his honours, nor the sensual man his pleasures; no not a drop of water to cool his tongue, Luke xvi. 24, 25. No meat nor drink there to strengthen the faint, no sleep to refresh the weary; and no music nor pleasant company to comfort and cheer up the sorrowful. And as for these good things, they despised in the world, they shall never more hear of them nor see them. No offers of Christ there, no pardons,

no peace ; no wells of salvation in the pit of destruction. In one word, they shall be deprived of whatsoever might comfort them, being totally and finally separated from God the fountain of all goodness.

3dly, Man naturally desires to be happy, being withal conscious to himself that he is not self-sufficient ; and therefore has ever a desire of something without himself to make him happy ; and the soul being by its natural make and constitution capable of enjoying God, and nothing else being commensurable to its desires ; it can never have true and solid rest till it rest in the enjoyment of God. This desire of happiness the rational creature can never lay aside, no not in hell. Now, while the wicked are on earth they seek their satisfaction in the creature ; and when one fails they go to another ; thus they put off their time in the world, deceiving their own souls, and luring them on with vain hopes. But in the other world, all comfort in the creature have failed together at once, and the shadows they are now pursuing, having all of them vanished in a moment, they shall be totally and finally separated from God, and see they have thus lost him. So the doors of earth and heaven both are shut against them at once. This will create them unspeakable anguish, while they shall live under an eternal gnawing hunger after happiness, which they certainly know, shall never be in the least measure satisfied, all doors being closed on them. Who then can imagine how this separation shall cut the damned to the heart ! How they will roar and rage under it ! and how it will sting them and gnaw them through the ages of eternity !

4thly, The damned shall know, that some are perfectly happy in the enjoyment of that God, from whom they themselves are separate : And this will aggravate the sense of their loss, that they can never have share with these happy ones. Being separated from God, they are separated from the society of the glorified saints and angels. They may see Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, Luke xvi. 23. but can never come into their company ; being as unclean lepers, thrust out without the camp, and excommunicated from the presence of the Lord, and of all his holy ones. It is the opinion of some, that every person in heaven or hell, shall hear and

see all that passeth in either state. Whatever is to be said of this, we have ground from the word to conclude, that the damned shall have a very exquisite knowledge of the happiness of the saints in heaven ; for what else can be meant by the rich man in hell his seeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom ? One thing is plain in this case, that their own torments will give them such notions of the happiness of the saints, as a sick man has of health, or a prisoner has of liberty. And as they cannot fail of reflecting on the happiness of those in heaven, more than they can attain to contentment with their own lot : So every thought of that happiness, will aggravate their loss. It would be a mighty torment to a hungry man, to see others liberally feasting, while he is so chained up, as he cannot have one crumb to stay his gnawing appetite. To bring music and dancing before a man labouring under extreme pains, would but increase his anguish : How then will the songs of the blessed, in their enjoyment of God, make the damned roar, under their separation from him !

5thly, They will remember, that time was, when they might have been made partakers of the blessed state of the saints, in their enjoyment of God : And this will aggravate their sense of the loss. All may remember, there was once a possibility of it ; that sometime they were in the world in some corners of which, the way of salvation was laid open to mens view ; and may wish they had gone round the world, till they had found it out. Despisers of the gospel will remember with bitterness, that Jesus Christ, with all his benefits, was offered them ; that they were exhorted, intreated and pressed to accept, but would not : and that they were warned of the misery they feel, and obtested to flee from the wrath to come, but they would not hearken. The gospel-offer slighted, will make a hot hell ; and the loss of an offered heaven, will be a sinking weight on the spirits of unbelievers in the pit. Some will remember, that there was a probability of their being eternally happy ; that sometime they seemed to stand fair for it, and were not far from the kingdom of God ! That they had once almost consented to the blessed bargain ; the pen in their hand, as it were, to sign the marriage contract betwixt Christ and their souls ; but unhappily, they dropped it, and turned

back from the Lord to their lusts again. And others will remember, that they thought themselves sure of heaven, but, being blinded with pride and self-conceit, they were above ordinances, and beyond instruction, and would not examine their state, which was their ruin : But then they shall in vain wish, they had reputed themselves the worst of the congregation in which they lived ; and curse the fond conceit they had of themselves, and that others had of them too. Thus it will sting the damned that they might have escaped this loss.

*Lastly*, They will see the loss to be irrecoverable ; that they must eternally lie under it, never, never to be repaired. Might the damned, after millions of ages in hell, regain what they have lost, it would be some ground of hope ; but the prize is gone, and can never be recovered. And there are two things here, which will pierce them to the heart. (1.) That they never knew the worth of it till it was irrecoverably lost. Should a man give away an earthen pot full of gold for a trifle, never knowing what was in it till it were quite gone from him and past recovery, how would this foolish action gall him, upon the discovery of the riches in it ! Such a one's case may be a faint resemblance of the case of despisers of the gospel, when in hell they lift up their eyes, and behold that to their torment, which they will not see now to their salvation. (2.) That they have lost it for loss and dung ; sold their part of heaven, and not enriched themselves with the price. They lost heavenly for earthly profits and pleasures, and now both are gone together from them. The drunkards cups are gone, the covetous man's gain, the voluptuous man's carnal delights, and the sluggard's ease ; nothing is left them to comfort them now. The happiness they lost remains indeed, but they can have no part in it for ever.

**USE.** Sinners, be persuaded to come to God through Jesus Christ, uniting with him through a Mediator ; that ye may be preserved from this fearful separation from him. O be afraid to live in a state of separation from God, lest that which ye now make your choice, become your eternal punishment hereafter : Do not reject communion with God, cast not off the communion of saints ; for it will be the misery of the damned, to be driven out from that com-

munion. Cease to build up the wall of separation betwixt God and you, by continuing in your sinful courses ; repent rather in time, and so pull it down, lest the cape-stone be laid upon it, and it stand for ever between you and happiness. Tremble at the thoughts of rejection and separation from God. By whomsoever men are rejected on the earth, they ordinarily find some pity to them ; but if ye be thus separated from God, ye will find all doors shut against you. Ye will find no pity from any in heaven ; neither saints nor angels will pity them whom God has utterly cast off : None will pity you in hell, where there is no love but loathing ; all being lothed of God, lothing him, and lothing one another. This is a day of losses and fears. I shew you a loss, you would do well to fear in time : Be afraid lest you lose God ; if ye do, a long eternity will be spent in roaring out lamentations for this loss. O horrid stupidity ! Men are in mighty care and concern to prevent worldly losses : But they are in hazard of losing heaven, the communion of the blessed, and all good things for soul and body in another world : Yet as careless in that matter, as if they were incapable of thought. O ! compare this day with the day our text aims at. This day is heaven opened to them, who hitherto have rejected Christ, and yet there is room, if they will come ; but that day the doors shall be shut. Now Christ is saying unto you, *Come*, then he will say, *Depart* ; seeing ye would not come when ye were bidden. Now pity is shown ; the Lord pities you, his servants pity you, and tell you, that the pit is before you, and cry to you, that ye do yourselves no harm : But then ye shall have no pity from God nor man.

*Secondly*, The damned shall be punished in hell with the punishment of Sense ; they must depart from God into everlasting fire. I am not in a mind to dispute, what kind of fire it is which they shall depart into, and be tormented by for ever, whether a material fire or not ? Experience will more than satisfy the curiosity of those, who are disposed rather to dispute about it, than to seek how to escape it. Neither will I meddle with that question, Where is it ? It is enough that the worm which never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched, will be found somewhere by impenitent sinners. But (1.) I shall evince, that whatever kind of fire it is ; it is more vehement and



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